

STUDIES ON LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY BYZANTINE FLOOR MOSAICS

I. MOSAICS AT NIKOPOLIS

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THIS is the first of three closely interrelated papers on floor mosaics of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. It is concerned with a specific and well-known monument, a pair of complementary panels in the transept wings of the so-called Basilica A at Nikopolis. These panels have proved a useful point of reference in the exploration of a number of problems concerning the history of late antique and early Byzantine floor decoration as a whole. Their date happens to coincide with a crucial moment in the development of this art and their iconographic and stylistic characteristics are such as to enable one to draw numerous and varied connections with monuments of other periods and regions. But their significance for the overall development can become apparent only in Parts II and III of these studies, which will deal respectively with the subject matter depicted on floors in Christian religious buildings and with certain stylistic aspects of the craft. In its entirety this group of three papers is intended as a preparatory study for a history of pavement decoration from the period of Constantine the Great to that of Justinian I.

The material in this field has increased enormously in the last few decades, thanks to the spectacular results of excavations in Constantinople, Antioch, Gerasa, Bethlehem, and Apamea, not to mention a host of other places in all parts of the Mediterranean world. Here is one branch of early Byzantine painting where we are no longer confronted with scattered and isolated examples but with coherent groups and consecutive series. It must now be the aim of scholars in this field to make the history of the craft intelligible. Although the majority of pavements are the work of artisans rather than artists, the mosaics are an integral part of the decoration of late antique and early Byzantine buildings. In this branch at least we may hope to be able eventually to follow step by step the process of evolution which led to the first great flowering of Byzantine art in the age of Justinian.¹

¹ The amount of comprehensive study hitherto devoted to pavements of the early Byzantine era is in inverse ratio to the attention paid to individual pieces upon their discovery. Mosaics are hailed almost invariably as major, or even principal, prizes of an excavation. Yet many of them are never mentioned again in subsequent literature and only very few have received really adequate study. Undoubtedly this is due in part to the difficulty of procuring satisfactory illustrations. Doro Levi in his *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* has done extremely valuable — indeed indispensable — pioneer work in the study of this art, but has given an account of individual subjects and motifs rather than of the floor mosaic as such. His treatment is particularly lacking in focus for the late period (fifth and sixth centuries), with which the present studies will be mainly concerned. The material at Antioch comes to an end just before the development reaches a climax in the period of Justinian.

Inevitably, then, the present paper cannot be complete in itself. The iconography and style of the Nikopolis pavements raise problems which can be answered only within the framework of those larger inquiries to which the succeeding papers will be devoted. Our present purpose is to provide a foundation for these inquiries through an analysis of a single monument of outstanding significance.

The reader should be warned, however, about certain weaknesses in the very foundation of the structure which is to be erected. The present study of the Nikopolis floors is based solely on published excavation reports. When this inquiry was first undertaken it was hoped that it would be possible to verify on the spot a number of points which the published reports and photographs leave unanswered. This hope had to be abandoned for practical reasons. Attempts to obtain additional photographs of the mosaics have been unsuccessful. Still, in spite of these handicaps, the study has not been abandoned because the published accounts and illustrations, inadequate as they are, permit certain conclusions which are of sufficient importance to warrant an exposition.²

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. DEMETRIUS AT NIKOPOLIS AND ITS MOSAICS

In the year 1915, shortly after the beginning of a period of intensive activity dedicated to the exploration of early Christian and early Byzantine churches in Greece, excavations at Nikopolis, the ancient Actium, on the coast of Epirus, brought to light a basilica decorated with what is still the most splendid group of mosaic pavements in the Balkan peninsula.³ The

² I wish to express my thanks to Professor John L. Caskey, Director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, for the sustained efforts he made on my behalf to obtain additional photographic material on the Nikopolis mosaics. Although these efforts proved vain the Greek Archaeological Society was kind enough to lend me from their own files original prints of previously published photographs and thus helped to improve the quality of the illustrations accompanying this article. My thanks are due to the Society as well as to Professor Caskey, who secured this loan. I also wish to thank Miss Louisa Dresser of the Worcester Art Museum and Professor Richard Stillwell at Princeton University for providing me with prints of the large hunting mosaic from Antioch at Worcester, Mass., for purposes of comparison.

³ The principal publications on this church and its mosaics are as follows, with shortened titles indicated first. Sotiriou 1915: G. A. Sotiriou, *Τὸ ψηφιδωτὸν δάπεδον τοῦ ἀνευρεθέντος ναοῦ ἐν Νικοπόλει τῆς Ἠπείρου* (reprint from *Ἱερὸς Σύνδεσμος*, December 1–15, 1915, nos. 255–256), Athens, 1915. Philadelphus 1916–18: A. Philadelphus, *Ἀνασκαφαὶ Νικοπόλεως*, in *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς*, 1916, pp. 33–45, 65–72, 121–2; 1917, pp. 48–71; 1918, pp. 34–41. F. Grossi-Gondi, “Una basilica Cristiana a Nicopolis in Epiro” in *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 23, 1917, pp. 121–7. Sotiriou 1929: G. A. Sotiriou, *Αἱ παλαιοχριστιανικαὶ βασιλικαὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος* in *Ἀρχαιολ. Ἐφημερίς* 1929, pp. 159 ff., especially pp. 206–207. J. St. Pelekanides, “Die Symbolik der frühchristlichen Fussbodenmosaiken Griechenlands” in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 3. Folge X, vol. 59, 1940, pp. 114–124.

church is situated within the confines of the wall with which Nikopolis was surrounded in the early Byzantine period. It was dedicated to St. Demetrius, as an inscription on the floor of the atrium implies, but has been known to archaeologists as Basilica A. Compared with the larger church known as Basilica B, which lies near the heart of the Byzantine city, it occupies a more peripheral position not far from the southern tract of the wall.⁴

In plan (Fig. 14) the church presents itself as an ordinary three-aisled basilica with atrium and narthex and annexes on either side of the latter. From an architectural point of view its most noteworthy feature is the transept which is of the "tripartite" type characteristic of a number of churches in the Balkans and elsewhere.⁵

The central area of the atrium, the aisles, the apse, and, probably, the central part of the transept, where the altar stood, had undecorated stone floors.⁶ All other floors were paved with mosaics. The predominant motif is a familiar one in the Balkans: an all-over pattern of squares or circles filled with animals, birds, plants, or fruit. We find variations of this theme in the porticoes of the atrium (Fig. 34),⁷ in the narthex,⁸ and in the chapel south of the narthex (Figs. 31, 32).⁹ The design in the apse of this chapel¹⁰ consists of a vine issuing from an amphora and framed by a semicircle of peacocks *en face* standing in arcades (Fig. 31). The mosaic floor in the room north of the narthex¹¹ shows a simple pattern of closely meshed interlace, the only purely geometrical design among all the floors in the church. The pavement of the nave was found in a ruined condition. It is certain, however,

⁴ Cf. the plan in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie*, XVII, 1937, cols. 513 f.

⁵ Cf. R. Krautheimer, "S. Pietro in Vincoli and the Tripartite Transept in the Early Christian Basilica," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 84, 1941, pp. 353 ff., especially pp. 418 ff. The author draws attention to the fact that the partitioning of the transept through piers, the insertion of choir screens, and the use of mosaic as a floor covering in the wings all serve to turn the transept wings into separate units reminiscent of and — presumably — functionally related to the pastophories of Near Eastern and North African churches. It may be noted also that the central section of the transept is at a slightly higher level than the two wings (Sotiriou 1929, p. 207).

⁶ It is not stated in any of the reports what kind of floor covering was found in the central square of the transept. In view of the absence of any description referring specifically to the floor in this section it is unlikely that any mosaics were found there. Tesserae of colored stone were, however, found at the bottom of the miniature crypt beneath the floor in front of the apse (Philadelphus 1916, p. 35). These may indicate the former existence of a mosaic decoration covering the opening to the crypt and, perhaps, the space around it.

⁷ Πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας (hereafter called Πρακτ.), 1916, p. 58, fig. 6; Philadelphus 1917, p. 65, fig. 20.

⁸ Philadelphus 1917, pp. 58 f., figs. 13, 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60 f., figs. 15–17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 63 f., figs. 18, 19.

¹¹ Πρακτ., 1916, p. 51, fig. 2.

that, like all the decorated pavements in the building, it was conceived as a unit with a single broad frame. Traces of this frame, consisting of circles and lozenges with the usual figures of birds, animals, or plants, were found all along the northern and southern colonnades as well as towards the west.¹² The over-all layout of designs inside the frame can no longer be ascertained but it is known that towards the west there was a pattern of interlacing circles with fruit, birds, and fishes, closely comparable to the design in the narthex.¹³ Further to the east this panel is destroyed so that its extent is not known. To the north and south the pattern is separated from the frame by panels of geometric design. Somewhere in the central or eastern section of the nave there is a large composition with a fruit tree in the center and various birds flying around it and standing at its foot.¹⁴ Near the northeastern and southeastern corners are two complementary but not entirely symmetrical compositions, each showing an amphora from which vines issue with peacocks flanking it on either side.¹⁵

The mosaics in the two wings of the transept, with which this study is specifically concerned, will be described later, after the date of the church and its decoration has been determined.

Dedicatory inscriptions in poetic form are part of the mosaic decoration and are placed in strategic positions in various parts of the church. One is in the center of the western portico of the atrium, another at the entrance to the apsed chapel south of the narthex. A panel flanked by two peacocks¹⁶ at the western end of the nave facing the main door contains the principal inscription recording the building of the church and there are additional inscriptions in the transept wings. Through these inscriptions the date of the building and its mosaics can be fixed within fairly narrow limits if only in a somewhat roundabout manner.

The inscription at the entrance to the nave was read by Philadelphus as follows:

¹² Philadelphus 1917, pp. 50 ff., figs. 2-5, 7-9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 56, fig. 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57, fig. 12. It is stated (*ibid.*, p. 58) that this mosaic is at Point 9 of the plan (p. 49). But in the caption of this plan Point 9 is identified, more plausibly, as one of the locations where the frame of circles and lozenges has been observed. It is likely that the large panel with a fruit tree and birds occupied a more central position.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52, fig. 6; p. 55, fig. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50, fig. 1a.

Λίθον ἀπαστράπτοντα Θ(εο)ῦ χάριν ἔνθα κ(αὶ) ἔνθα
 ἐκ θεμέθλων τολύπευσε κ(αὶ) ἀγλαίην πόρε πᾶσαν
 Δουμέτιος περίπυστος, ἀμωμήτων ἱερέων
 ἀρχιερεὺς πανάριστος, ὅλης πάτρης μέγα φέγ[γος].
 Αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ Κ(υρίου)· δίκαιοι εἰσελθόντων.¹⁷

From these verses we learn that a certain bishop Dometios built the church from its foundations and gave it all its ornaments, including presumably the floor mosaic of the nave of which the inscription forms a part.¹⁸ The inscription in the atrium reads:

Δομήτιος μὲν ὁ πρόην τὸν σεβάσμιον κατεσκεύασεν οἶκον
 Δομήτιος δὲ ὁ νῦν γε Ν(ικο)π(όλεως) ἐὼν ἐκίνου καὶ
 τῆς ἱερωσύνης διάδοχος,
 δυνάμει Χρ(ιστοῦ) τὴν πᾶσαν ἐκαλιέργησεν τρίστων.
 Εὐφρόσυνος μὴν ἐν τῷ νεῷ ὡς μαθητῆς τοῦ προτέρο(υ) [. . . .]
 Δημητρίου μάρτυρος ἐκάτερος εὐχαριστῶν τῇ προστάσει.

This inscription makes it clear that Dometios the founder had a pupil and successor of the same name and that it was the second Dometios who adorned the atrium (Tristoon). Both were devotees of St. Demetrius to whom the church evidently was dedicated.¹⁹

The name Dometios occurs again in the mosaic inscription of the chapel south of the narthex which repeats, with slight variations, that of the west end of the nave.²⁰ We shall find Dometios mentioned once more in the inscription which forms part of the mosaic decoration in the north wing of the transept.²¹ In both these instances there might be doubt as to whether the person referred to is Dometios I or II. But actually it can be asserted with complete assurance that both these mosaics and indeed all the pavements in the church, with the sole exception of that in the atrium, are the work of the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48. Cf. A. Ch. Chatzes, in *Ἀρχαιολ. Ἐφημερίς*, 1918, pp. 31 f.

¹⁸ In his first study of Nikopolis Sotiriou suggested tentatively that it might be possible to date the mosaics accurately on the strength of the traces of a few letters at the end of this inscription (cf. Sotiriou 1915, pp. 25 f.). He read these letters as ΑΨΜ (*sic!* misprint for ΑΦΜ?) and put forward the theory that they may denote the year 540 (ΦΜ) of the era of Actium (Α), which would be the equivalent of 509. Sotiriou's theory was rejected by Philadelphus, who claims that there are traces only of two letters one of which is a Δ (Philadelphus 1917, pp. 50 f.). Sotiriou himself, in his later study of the building (1929, pp. 201 n. 1, 207) did not return to his theory and ascribed the church to the second half of the fifth century (see also below, nn. 24, 42). It is quite possible that the letters in question denote a date but they were evidently in too poor a condition to permit a definitive reading.

¹⁹ Philadelphus 1917, p. 66. Cf. Chatzes, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 ff. I accept Chatzes' reasoning (p. 29) which makes it likely that the name of the two bishops was Dometios (or Domitios) rather than Doumetios.

²⁰ Philadelphus 1917, p. 63. Chatzes, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²¹ See below, pp. 100 f.

first Dometios. The atrium mosaic in fact stands alone in being a far cruder piece of work than any of the others (Fig. 34). The discrepancy is strong enough to be evident in photographs;²² the excavator was struck by it so forcibly that even in the account of the first campaign, when only part of the atrium floor had been uncovered and the inscription introducing the second Dometios was not yet known, he already doubted whether the atrium pavement could be contemporaneous with the rest of the floor decoration in the basilica.²³ Dometios I built and decorated the entire church as the inscription in the nave says. Dometios II merely completed the work by paving the three atrium porticoes.

Unfortunately neither of the two namesakes is known from historical sources.²⁴ But we do know the date of a Nikopolitan bishop whose rule cannot have been separated from that of the Dometioi, or, more specifically, from that of Dometios I, by a very great interval. In a room adjoining the large Basilica B a mosaic was found which was recognized immediately as a close relative of those done by Dometios I in Basilica A.²⁵ Only one photograph of this pavement has been published and an extremely poor one (Fig. 33). But it is evident that the pavement shows the same pattern as the floor of the apsed chapel south of the narthex of Basilica A (Fig. 32). We find in both the same grate pattern formed by broad ribbons and filled with various animals, birds, plants, fruits, and ornaments. A detailed comparison is rendered difficult by the lack of adequate reproductions but nevertheless it is possible to name a number of specific points which indicate that there is a closer relationship between these two pavements than there is between either of them and Dometios II's weak replica of the same grate pattern in the atrium of Basilica A (Fig. 34). For instance, both in the annex room of Basilica A and in the annex room of Basilica B the ribbons forming the grate pattern were decorated with broad stripes, whereas the ribbons in the atrium are plain except for small crosses at their intersections. The squares in the two annex rooms are relatively similar in size,²⁶ whereas those in the

²² Πρακτ., 1916, p. 58, fig. 6 (our Fig. 34); Philadelphus 1917, p. 65, fig. 20.

²³ Πρακτ., 1915, p. 66.

²⁴ When Sotiriou (1929, p. 201 n. 1) refers to Phouriki's article "Νικόπολις-Πρέβεζα" in *Ἡπειρωτικὰ Χρονικά*, III, 1928, pp. 151 f., in support of the statement that the two Dometioi perhaps lived in the second half of the fifth century it is a perfect example of a vicious circle, since Phouriki (*ibid.*, n. 7) says explicitly that in dating the two bishops he is following the views of Sotiriou as expressed in his earlier paper (1915, pp. 24 ff.).

²⁵ A. Philadelphus, *Ἀνασκαφαὶ Νικοπόλεως 1921-1926. Χριστιανικὸν ἱδρυμα Ἀλκίσωνος*, in *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας*, 2nd series, vol. IV, 1927 (hereafter called Philadelphus 1927), p. 55; p. 57, fig. 9.

²⁶ Those in Basilica A measure 23 x 23 cm (cf. Philadelphus 1917, p. 62). The length of the sides of those in the annex room of Basilica B varies between 24 and 30 cm (Philadelphus 1927, p. 56).

atrium are considerably larger.²⁷ If the atrium decoration seems so exceedingly crude it is primarily because of the undue enlargement which the individual motifs have suffered as the result of their having to fill squares of a much larger size. The pattern has simply been blown up in order to fill the great expanse of the atrium floor. In the annex of Basilica B, on the other hand, where the total area covered by the grate pattern is also a good deal larger than in the annex of Basilica A, it is the total number of squares that has been increased, whereas the individual square remains relatively small.²⁸ One might also compare individual motifs in the two annex pavements,²⁹ but without adequate reproductions such comparisons cannot be carried very far. In any case it is safe to say that the pavement in the annex of Basilica B is relatively much closer to the work of Dometios I than to that of his pupil and successor, Dometios II, and that consequently its chronological distance from the work of Dometios I cannot be very great and ought to be reckoned in decades rather than centuries.

Now there is included in the pavement of the annex room of Basilica B an inscription which, although in fragmentary condition, clearly states that "the whole work was built from the foundations by the most holy archbishop Alkison."³⁰ Bishop Alkison of Nikopolis is referred to repeatedly in historical sources relating to the Acacian schism under Emperor Anastasius I and we know that he died in 516.³¹ The pavement in the annex of Basilica B must date from the very end of the fifth or the first sixteen years of the sixth century. Dometios I, whose work is closely related to that of Alkison, must belong to the same general period and indeed must be one of Alkison's immediate predecessors or successors.

In order to decide whether Dometios I ruled before or after Alkison we must introduce another piece of evidence from the large Basilica B.

²⁷ The exact measurements of these squares are not given, but they are probably closer to 50 x 50 or even 60 x 60 cm. Sotiriou 1915, p. 15, says that there are in the north wing of the atrium 147 squares on an area measuring 14.50 x 4.30 m. In the south annex of Basilica A we find the same number of squares covering an area of only 7.12 x 2.26 m (Philadelphus 1917, p. 62). Even allowing for the width of the frame, which probably should be subtracted from the size of the area covered by the 147 squares in the atrium, it is evident that these squares must be a good deal larger than those in the annex of the narthex.

²⁸ In this room there are 280 squares in an area of roughly 10 x 4 m (Philadelphus 1927, p. 56).

²⁹ Cf. the group of three "cucumbers" on the floor of the annex room of Basilica B, a motif which occurs several times on the mosaics in Basilica A (figs. 32, 33).

³⁰ Philadelphus 1927, p. 58.

³¹ *Marcellini Chronicon* (Migne, *PL* 51, col. 939). Other references to him are in Euagrius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3, 31; 3, 33 (Migne, *PG* 86bis, cols. 2657, 2669), and in the correspondence of Pope Hormisdas (J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, VIII, cols. 401-402; 404-405; 420E).

Sotiriou³² mentions an inscription found by him in that basilica with the following text: *Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ καλὸν Δουμετίου*. Sotiriou, who does not state in what part of the church this inscription was found, implies that *τοῦτο* refers to the building itself and concludes that Basilica B, like Basilica A, is the work of the Dometioi both of whom he places in the second half of the fifth century. The date seems to him all the more logical in view of the fact that Alkison in the beginning of the sixth century built an annex to Basilica B. The only part of this argument which can be considered at least probable is the contention that the building of Basilica B (Fig. 15) antedates the construction of the annex room with the inscription of Alkison.³³ But this by no means settles the date of Dometios. Photographs (Fig. 17) show that the inscription mentioning his name is not on any structural part of Basilica B but on a stone arch which seems to have belonged to the altar canopy or some other piece of church furniture. Therefore the inscription merely indicates that this particular piece of furniture is the work of Dometios, whereas the church itself may well antedate his rule. But the most significant fact revealed by these photographs concerns the rendering of the name Dometios in the inscription. The name is not written out in full but is given in the shape of a monogram. This fact has important implications of a chronological nature. Weigand, who has traced the history of monogrammatic inscriptions,³⁴ has shown how in a first phase only personal names were rendered in monogrammatic form, while the rest of the text was written out in full; later on entire texts may be found written in the form of monograms. The first

³² Sotiriou 1929, p. 201 n. 1.

³³ It is important to realize that on the plan reproduced, *ibid.*, p. 202, fig. 34, the word “Ἀλκίσων” is erroneously placed inside the apsed chapel south of the narthex of the basilica. Philadelphus’ more detailed plan and description make it quite clear that the pavement with the grate pattern and the inscription of Alkison is in the oblong room east of the apsed chapel (Philadelphus 1927, pp. 55 ff. and fig. 1 on p. 48, our Fig. 16). That room does indeed give the impression of having been built on to the already existing south wall of the basilica (cf. Πρακτ., 1938, pl. I facing p. 116, our Fig. 15). In the case of the apsed chapel this is far less certain, since its existence seems to have been taken into account in laying out the narthex of the basilica. In other words, the sequence seems to be: (1) chapel, (2) basilica, (3) oblong room with Alkison’s inscription. Possibly chapel and basilica could have been built in one and the same operation — cf. the similarly placed chapel built by Dometios in Basilica A — but it is not likely that the chapel was built after the basilica. Obviously there is need for further investigation on this site. Sotiriou wrote in 1938, when the excavation of Basilica B was completed, that the annex still remains to be fully explored (Πρακτ., 1938, p. 117). The only detailed plan we have of the annex at least indicates that it is not a single homogeneous complex (Philadelphus 1927, p. 48, fig. 1, our Fig. 16). A break or some kind of dividing line runs from north to south on the floor between the chapel and the room of Alkison. So it would seem quite plausible that the chapel and Alkison’s room belong to different periods and that only the latter, but not the former, was built when the basilica was already in existence.

³⁴ *Byzantion*, VI, 1931, pp. 413 ff.

stage is exemplified by seals which are thought to belong to the end of the sixth century.³⁵ It may be argued that the case of our inscription is not strictly parallel to that of the seals since, in spite of Sotiriou's transcription, text and name are not necessarily intended to be read continuously and as a single sentence.³⁶ The text is enclosed between two crosses and the monogram occupies a separate panel. But there still remains the shape of the monogram which provides a more definite chronological criterion. As Weigand has shown,³⁷ from the end of the fourth until the sixth century the "double-bar" type of monogram, based preferably on an M, N, H, or \square , was in exclusive use both in the Greek East and in the Latin West. It was in the period of Justinian that the cruciform type of monogram first appeared. Even in Justinian's time, however, monograms of the "double-bar" type were still in the majority, as is shown by a survey of examples in buildings erected by that emperor. It was only in the second part of the sixth and the early seventh century that the cruciform type finally prevailed. Our Dometios monogram is of the cruciform type and it shows that type fully developed.³⁸ It can hardly be earlier than 550 and is much more likely to belong to the second half of the sixth century.

Therefore, unless we make the gratuitous assumption that there was yet a third benefactor of the Nikopolitan churches by the name of Dometios, we must assign one of the two namesakes to this relatively advanced period. In view of the evidence previously gathered, which indicates that Dometios I was bishop at a time not too far removed from that of Alkison (d. 516), it is probable that the inscription with the cruciform monogram refers to Dometios II. All it records is a donation of a piece of furniture to a church which may be, and, in view of its relationship to the annex room of Alkison, probably is, of considerably earlier date.³⁹ But the principal importance of the inscription in the present context is that it proves that one of the Dometioi was bishop in the advanced sixth century. This means that in all likelihood both Dometioi lived well inside that century. For it must be remembered

³⁵ G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'Empire Byzantin*, Paris, 1884, pp. 86 f.

³⁶ But cf. for a similar formula, also beginning with *καί*, an inscription in Palestine described by Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the years 1873-4*, II, London, 1896, pp. 220 ff.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 412 f.; cf. also *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 52, 1937, pp. 129 f.

³⁸ For the early form of that type with only very short cross bars cf. *Jahrbuch* 1937, p. 127, fig. 2h (monogram of Theodora).

³⁹ A. de Capitani d'Arzago (in *Munera: Raccolta di Scritti in Onore di Antonio Giussani*, Milan, 1944, pp. 199 ff.) found striking analogies between the layout of this church and that of the Basilica of Sta. Tecla in Milan in its earliest phase, which he believed goes back to the fourth century.

that, according to the inscription in the atrium of Basilica A, Dometios II was the pupil and successor of Dometios I. Granted even that he need not have been his immediate successor the interval between the periods when the two namesakes occupied the see of Nikopolis can hardly be more than a few decades. If Dometios II was bishop around or, more probably, sometime after 550, Dometios I, his teacher and predecessor, must be a successor rather than a predecessor of Alkison who died in 516. He cannot have been Alkison's immediate successor, for we know that that person's name was John.⁴⁰ But the length of John's rule is not known and after him there is a complete blank in the list of Nikopolitan bishops almost to the end of the sixth century.⁴¹ Since Dometios I must have been in office at a time close to that of Alkison, yet far enough advanced to permit his having been the teacher of Dometios II, his dates can be fixed as falling approximately within the second quarter of the sixth century. It was in the earlier half of the reign of Justinian that the basilica of St. Demetrius was built and decorated with its splendid floor mosaics.⁴² This dating, we may add, receives welcome corroboration from the style of the numerous Ionic impost capitals found in the church.⁴³

⁴⁰ Mansi, *op. cit.*, VIII, cols. 401–402.

⁴¹ No source gives the names of any bishops of Nikopolis after John and prior to Andrew, who was in office at the time of Gregory the Great (cf. Phouriki, *op. cit.*, p. 154).

⁴² A date in the middle of the sixth century was originally proposed by Philadelphus on the basis of some rather general arguments (Philadelphus 1916, pp. 42 f.; 1917, pp. 68 ff.; 1918, p. 41). Sotiriou, on the other hand, argued in favor of a date in the second half of the fifth century (see above, nn. 18, 24). It is perhaps worth mentioning that the building technique employed in the Basilica of Dometios has been described by both Philadelphus and Sotiriou as being similar to that of the walls of Nikopolis which allegedly date from a restoration of the city by Justinian as reported by Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, IV, 1, 37 (cf. Sotiriou 1915, p. 26; Philadelphus 1916, pp. 43 f.). A passing reference may also be permissible to one Dometios, author of religious poetry and follower of Romanos the Melode (first half of the sixth century; cf. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata*, I, Paris, 1876, pp. 320 ff.). The bond of poetry apart, there is no evidence that would permit us to identify this Dometios with either of the two bishops whose names are recorded in the verses of our basilica.

⁴³ The Corinthian capital reproduced by Philadelphus (1918, p. 37, fig. 4; cf. R. Kautzsch, *Kapitellstudien*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1936, p. 68, no. 216), though found in the narthex of the church, is of little value for purposes of dating. It is an isolated piece of sub-normal size (height 32 cm) and may not have been employed in the building in any structural capacity. The Ionic impost capitals, of which a specimen is reproduced by Philadelphus (1918, p. 38, fig. 6), are less interesting artistically, but far more important from our point of view. For of these a large number was found in the church, as Philadelphus testifies (*ibid.*), and there can be no doubt that they were an integral part of Dometios' structure. Other related pieces are in secondary use in the mosque at Prevesi and are thought to come from our church (for these cf. Πρακτ., 1914, pp. 236 ff. and fig. 9β, δ; Philadelphus 1918, p. 38; Kautzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 180, no. 575). They are of a well-known sixth-century type, in which the original meaning of the Ionic volutes is frequently lost, two volutes being placed at each corner of the capital. Justinian's buildings contain numerous examples of this (cf. Kautzsch,

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSEPT MOSAICS

We now turn to the pavements of the transept wings which are undoubtedly an integral part of the lavish floor decoration devised by the first Dometios and form the proper object of the present study. Each wing is an almost square room measuring 6.80 x 7.08 m.⁴⁴ In both rooms the floor decoration consists of a more or less square panel surrounded by a series of frames which fill the entire space between the panel and the wall. The panel in the north wing is somewhat larger than that in the south wing (2.93 x 3.01 m as against 2.40 x 2.22 m). In the latter the width of the multiple frame is about equal to that of the central panel.

The panel in the north wing (Figs. 18, 19)⁴⁵ shows a landscape with trees and birds and, below, a *tabula ansata* with an inscription in four lines which will be quoted later. The ground from which the landscape rises is a narrow strip with an upper fringe of fine hatching immediately above the *tabula ansata*. On, or rather somewhat above, this strip stand three fruit trees (a pear, an apple, and a pomegranate tree, according to the excavator), regularly spaced and each flanked by two cyprus trees. The fruits stand out in red and yellow hues against the dark green foliage. Flowers grow in the intervals between the stems of the trees. Two large birds ("geese") stand in front of the lateral fruit trees; to the left of the central tree a smaller bird ("a partridge") is seen. Like the large bird facing him he is shown pecking. Perhaps there was another small bird to the right of the central tree. In addition more than half a dozen birds are seen flying in the "sky" above the crowns of the trees. All the birds, and particularly the two "geese," are very large in comparison with the size of the trees.

The innermost border surrounding this landscape is a narrow strip decorated with bead-and-reel ornament. There follows a very heavy running spiral, 24 cm wide, and, separated from this by a plain strip of dark tile color, a frame of interlacing circles formed by two heavy lines (one green, the other tile color) and each filled by a bird in various colors with a rose-colored ribbon around the neck. Then comes what is really the principal frame, a broad zone, about 60 cm wide, representing blue water densely populated with every variety of fish and a number of water birds; there are

op. cit., pl. 34, nos. 557-559). The closest parallel to the pieces in Dometios' church is provided by a group of capitals in the nave of the church of St. John in Ephesos, which bear the monograms of Justinian and Theodora (*ibid.*, pl. 36, no. 567a-e, and pp. 176 ff.).

⁴⁴ These measurements are taken from the plan reproduced by Sotiriou 1929, p. 206, fig. 37 (our Fig. 14) and apply to the south wing. The exact size of the north wing is not known.

⁴⁵ Philadelphus 1916, figs. 6-14 after p. 72.

also water plants and two nude figures of fishermen — one, on the east side, sitting on a rock, the other, on the south side, attacking a large fish with a harpoon (Fig. 19). This zone is separated from the walls of the room by an outer frame decorated with a dark blue meander pattern with squares. Each square is filled with a red rosette.

The pavement in the south wing (Figs. 20–22, 25–27) ⁴⁶ is evidently intended as a *pendant* to the one just described. The two outer frames correspond exactly to the two outer frames in the north wing. The only difference worth mentioning is the fact that in the marine zone the human element is more conspicuous. In the south section of this zone we see a fisherman with a rod (Fig. 26), in the east section another with a net, and in the north section there are two human figures with name inscriptions; “Ophellyras” is seen trying to catch a water bird; “Hermes,” holding a net, is seated on a rock (Fig. 27). But instead of the sequence of narrow frames, which in the north wing separates the marine zone from the central panel, in the south wing this intermediate space is occupied by a single very broad frieze far exceeding in width all the other frames. It is filled with a vine rinceau forming a total of sixteen large circular medallions (80 to 90 cm in diameter), filled alternately by a nude or nearly nude hunter and an animal which the hunter attacks.

The central panel, which is separated from the hunting frieze by a simple strip of crowstep ornament, unfortunately is badly damaged. Even what remains of it cannot be fully utilized because the available photographs and descriptions do not give a sufficiently detailed picture. The principal theme, however, is clear (Fig. 20). The panel is filled almost entirely by two life-size figures of men of martial appearance. The figures stand on either side of a tree described by the excavator as being perhaps an oak or an olive tree. Both men wear what is described as a cuirass and leggings and they each hold a spear and, according to one description, also a shield.⁴⁷ By the feet of each of the two men lies a dog or other animal. As in the case of the north wing panel the ground is indicated by a strip below the figures, but this time the fringe of hatched lines points downward and a row of flowers is seen growing up from the ground. Two slender shoots of vine, also rising from the ground, form an outer frame for the figure group. At the chest level of the two men a *tabula ansata*, originally 1.15 m long, and 0.40 m wide,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, figs. 15–29 and pls. I and II after p. 72.

⁴⁷ Cf. Πακτ., 1915, p. 70. The dark, protruding shape visible on the right of the right-hand figure could well be a shield slung over the man's shoulder. The man to the left perhaps carried a shield in a corresponding position, as is indicated by a trace of an outline which is too high up to belong to his shoulder.

may be seen stretching across the panel in front of the figures and the central tree. All that is preserved of this tablet is the upper right-hand corner with the right-hand *ansa* and the end of the first two lines of what was originally a four-line inscription⁴⁸ and also a fragment of the left-hand *ansa*. Whether the inscription floats freely or is supported by the hands of the two men which are not engaged in holding the spears is not clear either from the photographs or from the excavation report, but Sotiriou⁴⁹ describes the tablet as being held by the two men. The ruinous condition and inadequate publication of this whole panel are much to be regretted because this is evidently a very curious scene and one that is doubly puzzling and surprising in a religious context. Analysis and interpretation of the two complementary compositions must start with the panel in the northern wing which is preserved in its entirety.

3. THE IMAGE OF EARTH AND OCEAN (FIGS. 18, 19)

The landscape in the center of the pavement in the north wing calls to mind in a general way the wall decoration of the period of Augustus at Prima Porta with its vistas of orchards enlivened by birds in the foreground and in the air above.⁵⁰ Illusionistic vistas of this type were used as wall decorations as late as the Constantinian period; witness the fresco fragments found in the south church of Theodorus at Aquileia.⁵¹ Our panel, however, seems abstract and heraldic by comparison with these frescoes. Trees are tidily aligned on a single plane, their relationship to the "ground" on which they grow is quite unrealistic, and the two large birds at their base form an almost symmetric pair. The schematism of the composition calls to mind a group of sixth- and seventh-century mosaic pavements in Palestine and Transjordan, which show animals or birds confronted at the foot of one or more fruit trees without a landscape context. The most pertinent example is a panel in the baptistery of the church on Mount Nebo, on which we see five fruit trees regularly spaced, two gazelles confronting each other in the intervals between the two outer trees, and two birds in profile at either end. The creatures flanking the central tree are destroyed, but according to the

⁴⁸ Cf. below, p. 115.

⁴⁹ 1915, p. 11.

⁵⁰ G. E. Rizzo, *La Pittura Ellenistico-Romana*, Milan, 1929, pls. 180–182. For other related decorations see S. Reinach, *Répertoire de Peintures Grecques et Romaines*, Paris, 1922, p. 393,2 (Auditorium of Maecenas); p. 394,1 (Stabian Baths at Pompeii; cf. also *Art Bulletin*, 1945, fig. 59 facing p. 21); p. 394,4 (House in Pompeii; cf. A. Mau, in *Römische Mitteilungen*, 9, 1894, pp. 51 f.).

⁵¹ *La Basilica di Aquileia*, Bologna, 1933, pp. 167 ff. and pl. 23.

excavator they were probably birds.⁵² We may note incidentally that three of the five trees have been identified as pomegranate trees, the other two, more tentatively, as apple and pear trees.⁵³ As we have seen, these same three species were recognized independently by Philadelphus in the three fruit trees of the Nikopolis panel.⁵⁴

The Mount Nebo mosaic is dated by an inscription in the year 597.⁵⁵ Other related examples in the same general region also belong to the sixth and seventh centuries.⁵⁶ This Palestinian — or mainly Transjordanian — group has an early forerunner in a fragmentary mosaic frieze at Antioch showing four animals of prey peacefully paired with four tame animals and trees standing in between. The word ΦΙΛΙΑ inscribed on a pillar in front of the leftmost tree indicates that this is an illustration of the Golden Age.⁵⁷ In one of the examples of the Transjordanian group the same thought is expressed through an inscription quoting Isaiah's prophecy that "the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (xi, 7).⁵⁸ Thus the Antioch mosaic, which has been assigned to the fourth century,⁵⁹ is connected with these later pavements not

⁵² S. J. Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo*, Jerusalem, 1941, pls. 103,1; 106; 107, and pp. 230 f.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Philadelphus 1916, p. 66. A third example of the same combination takes us once more to Palestine. Choricus in his description of St. Sergius in Gaza speaks of ὄχραι καὶ ῥοπαὶ καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι (*Od.* VII, 115; XI, 589) adorning the spaces beneath the corners of the frame which holds aloft the roof of the church (*Laud. Marc.*, I, 35; ed. Teubner, p. 11). Was it due to the influence of Homer that the combination of the three trees became a convention among artists as it apparently did? This is not unlikely, particularly in view of the Homeric allusion in the inscription of the Nikopolitan mosaic, for which see below, n. 76.

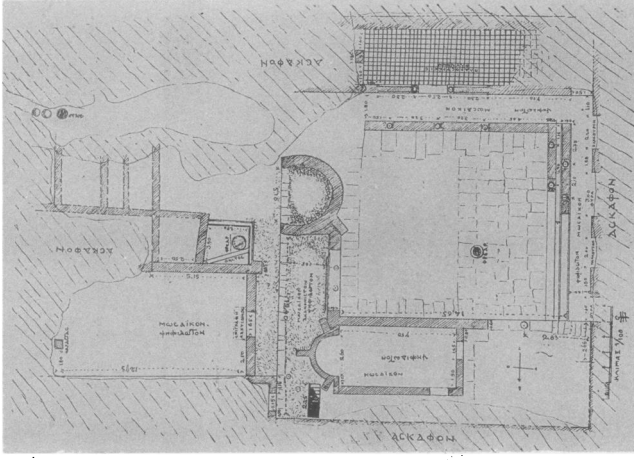
⁵⁵ Saller, *op. cit.*, pp. 247 ff.

⁵⁶ Shiloh (*Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, 1931, fig. 11 facing p. 81). Madaba, Elias Church, apse of crypt (*Izvestija of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople*, VIII, 1903, pl. IX; for the late sixth century date of this mosaic cf. Saller, *op. cit.*, p. 248; for a recent photograph see S. J. Saller and B. Bagatti, *The Town of Nebo*, Jerusalem, 1949, pl. 40,5). Ma'in, north annex of church: fragment of left half of panel showing pomegranate tree and traces of an ox; an inscription (Isaiah, xi, 7) permits the reconstruction of a lion in the right half, the whole being a representation of the Golden Age (R. de Vaux in *Revue Biblique*, 47, 1938, pp. 232 ff. and pl. XI, 1). El-Muhayet, Church of SS. Lot and Procopius (Saller and Bagatti, *op. cit.*, pl. 14,1) and Church of St. George (*ibid.*, pl. 30,1). Khirbet-el-Mefjar, Ummayyad palace (*Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, 1946, pp. 99 f. and pl. V).

⁵⁷ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II, Princeton, London, and The Hague, 1938, p. 182 no. 44, and pl. 31. D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, Princeton, London, and The Hague, 1947, pp. 317 ff. and pls. 72, 130c, 174a.

⁵⁸ Pavement at Ma'in; cf. above, n. 56. The same meaning probably underlies the choice of animals on a pavement at Madaba (R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 233 and pl. XI, 2; cf. Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 318).

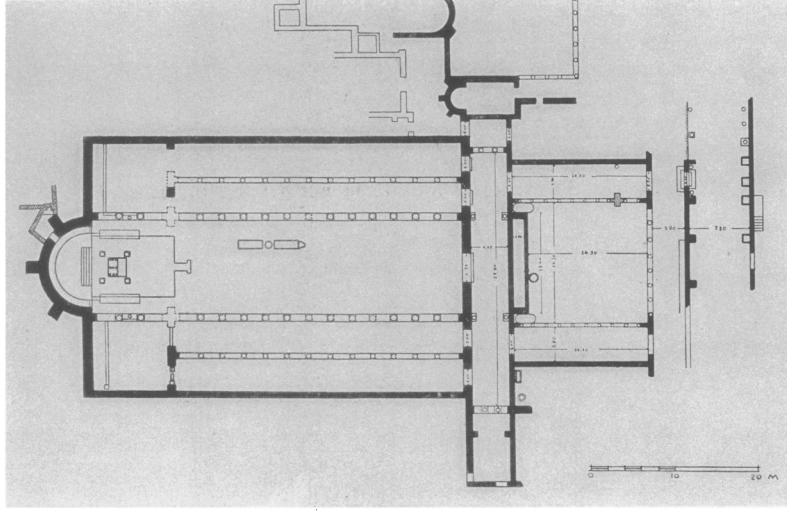
⁵⁹ C. R. Morey in *Baltimore Museum Quarterly*, II, 4, 1937–38, p. 4. Levi, on the other hand, suggests a date as late as the third quarter of the fifth century (*op. cit.*, pp. 586, 626); his reasons seem hardly sufficient.



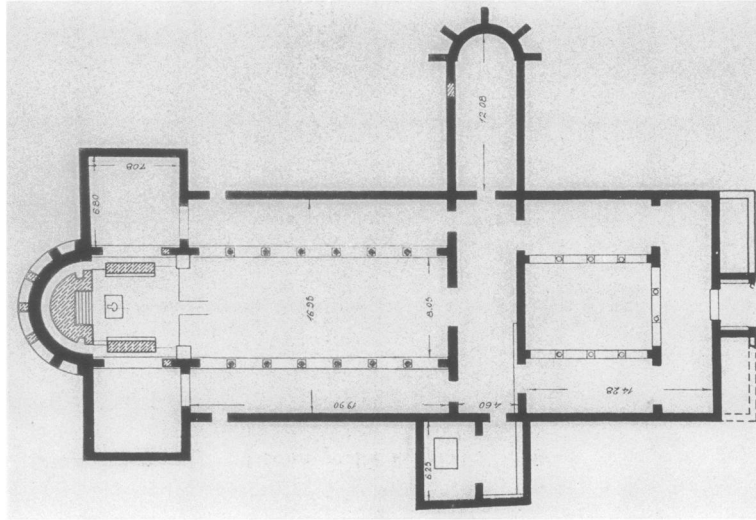
16. Nikopolis. Structures adjoining Basilica B to the south. Ground plan



17. Nikopolis. Inscription found in Basilica B



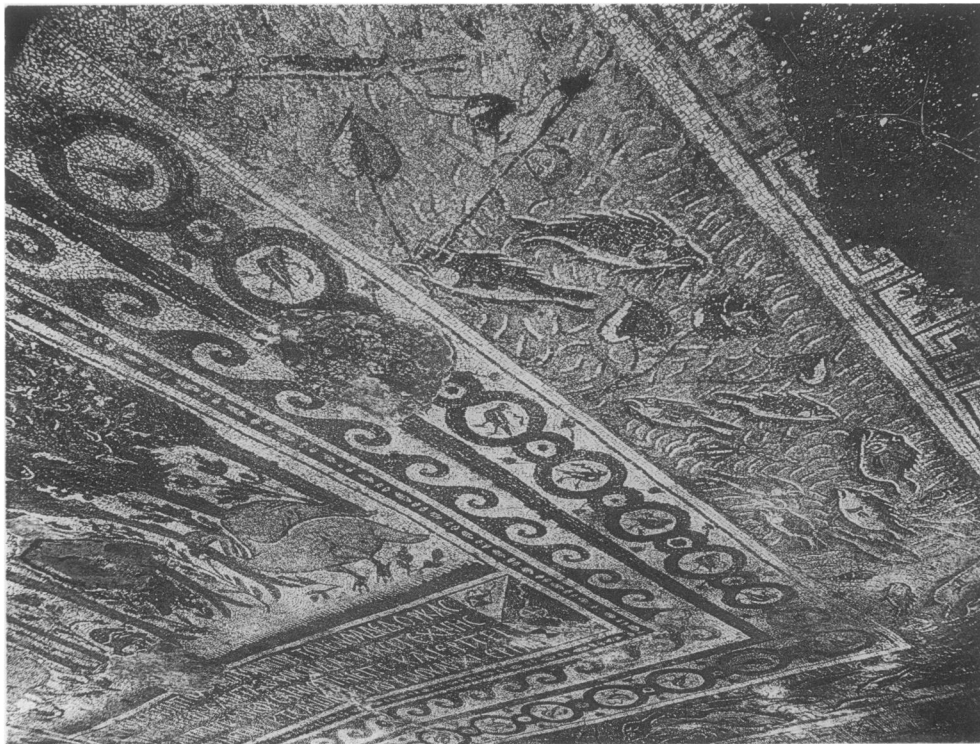
15. Nikopolis. Basilica B. Ground plan



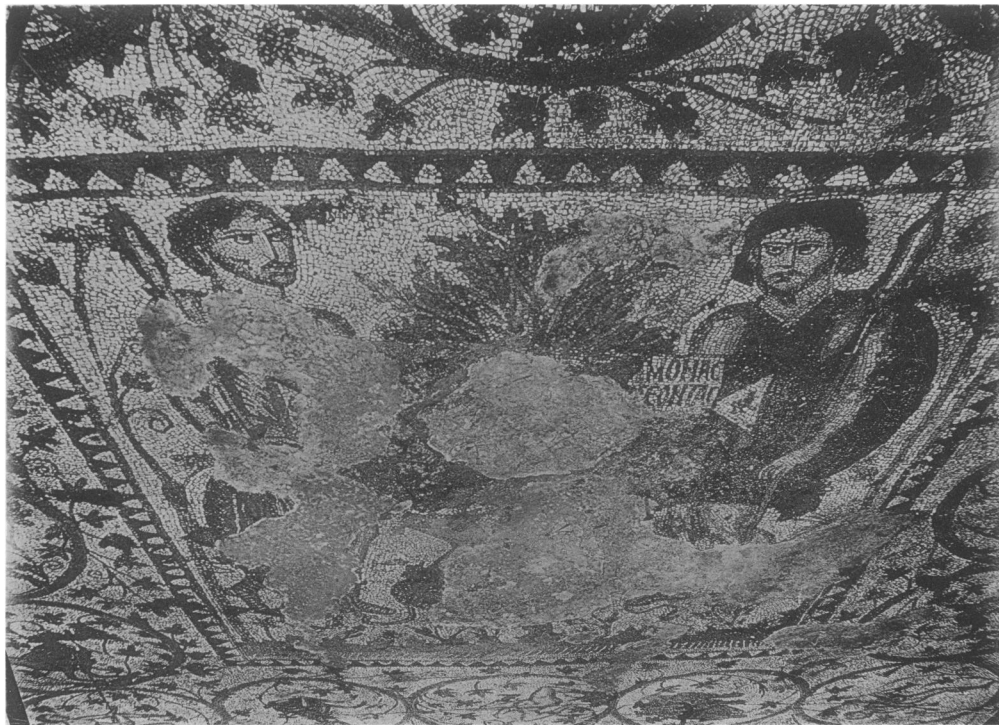
14. Nikopolis. Church of St. Demetrius ("Basilica A"). Ground plan



18. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in north wing of transept



19. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in north wing of transept. Detail (southwest corner)



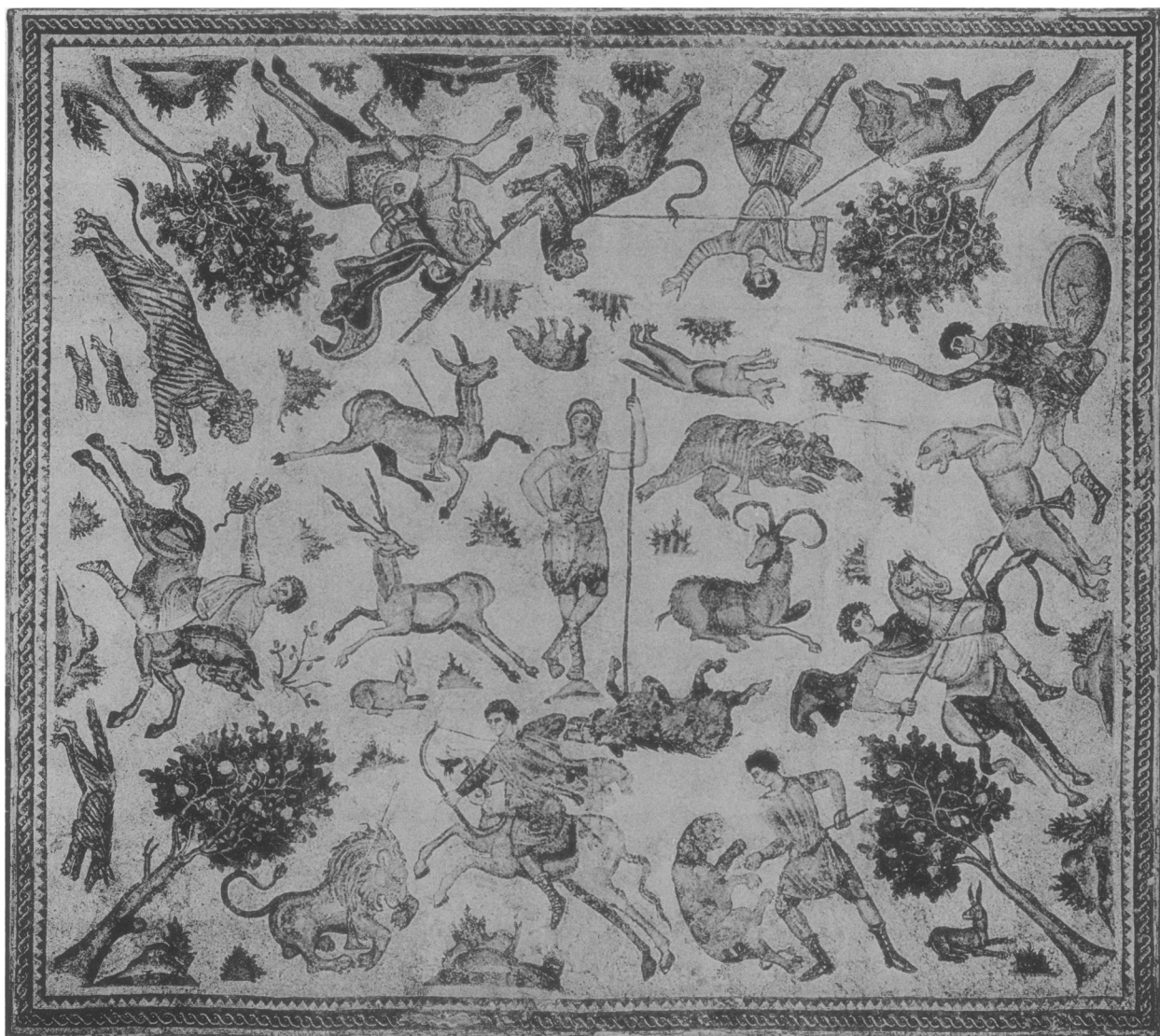
20. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Center panel



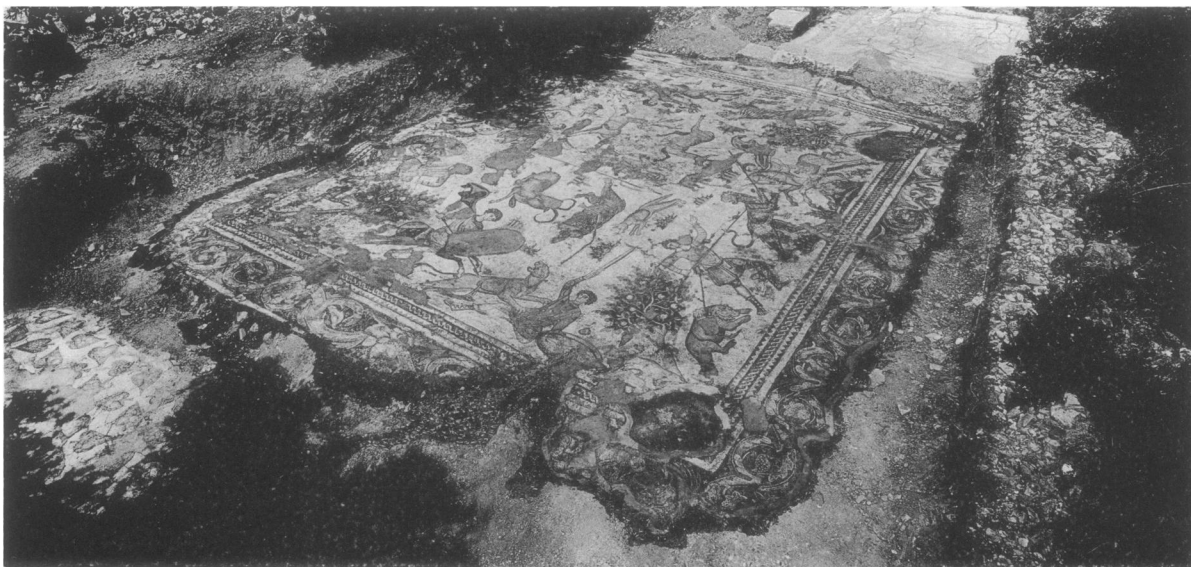
21. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Detail of framework (southwest corner)



22. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Composite view



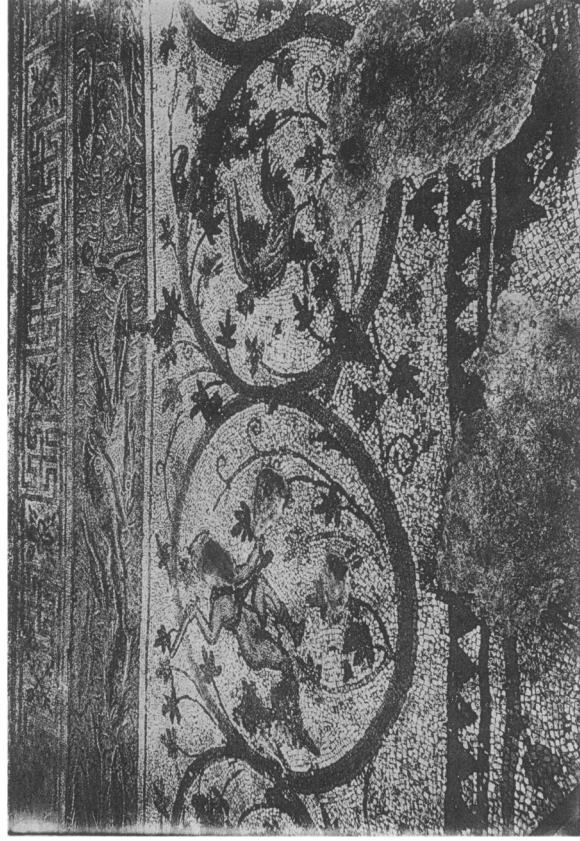
23. Worcester, Massachusetts. Art Museum. Mosaic from Antioch. Central panel.
Courtesy Worcester Art Museum



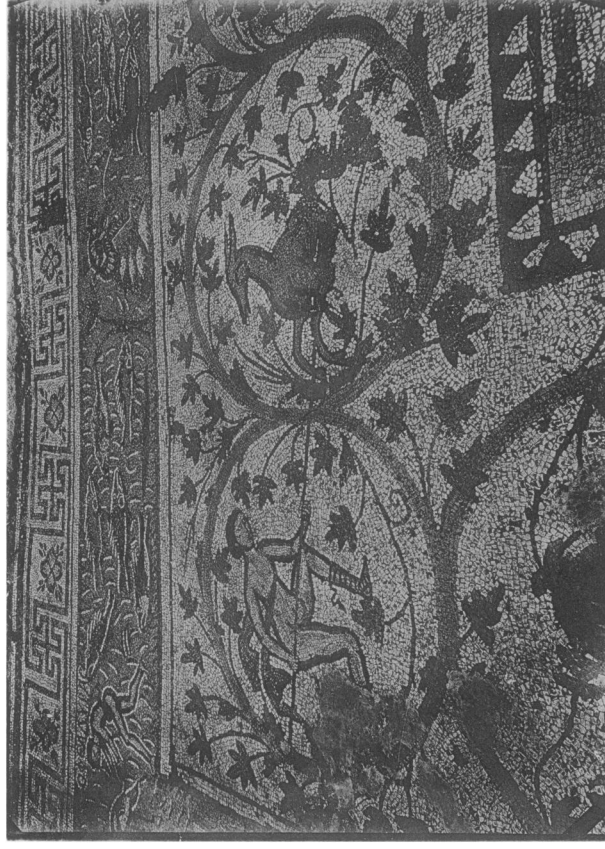
24. Mosaic shown in Figure 23, *in situ*, with rinceau border



25. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Detail of framework (west side)



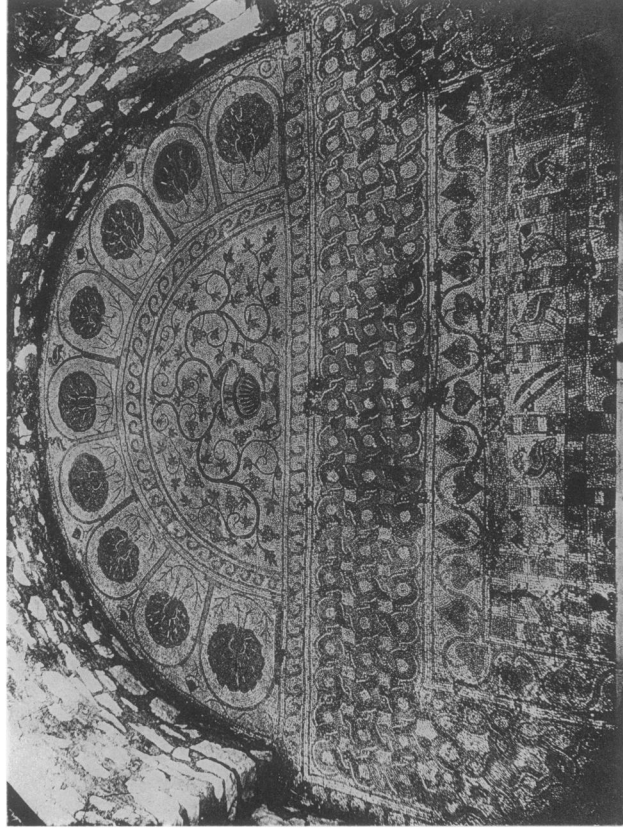
26. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Detail of framework (south side)



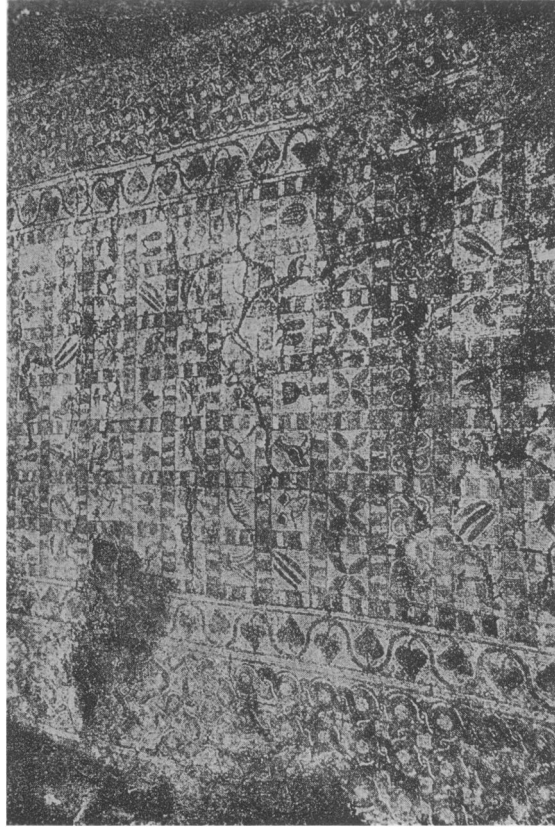
27. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Mosaic in south wing of transept. Detail of framework (northwest corner)



28-30. Mosaic from Antioch shown in Figures 23 and 24. Details of rinceau border



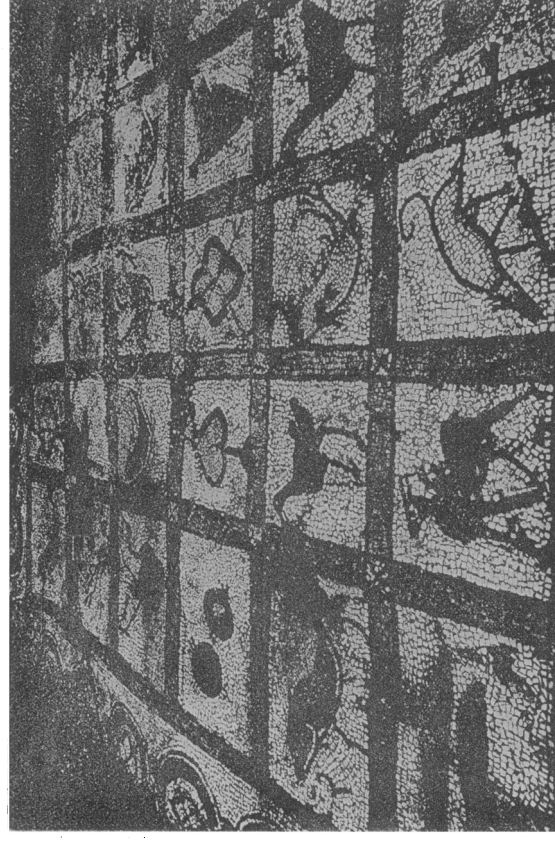
31. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Chapel south of narthex. Mosaic in apse



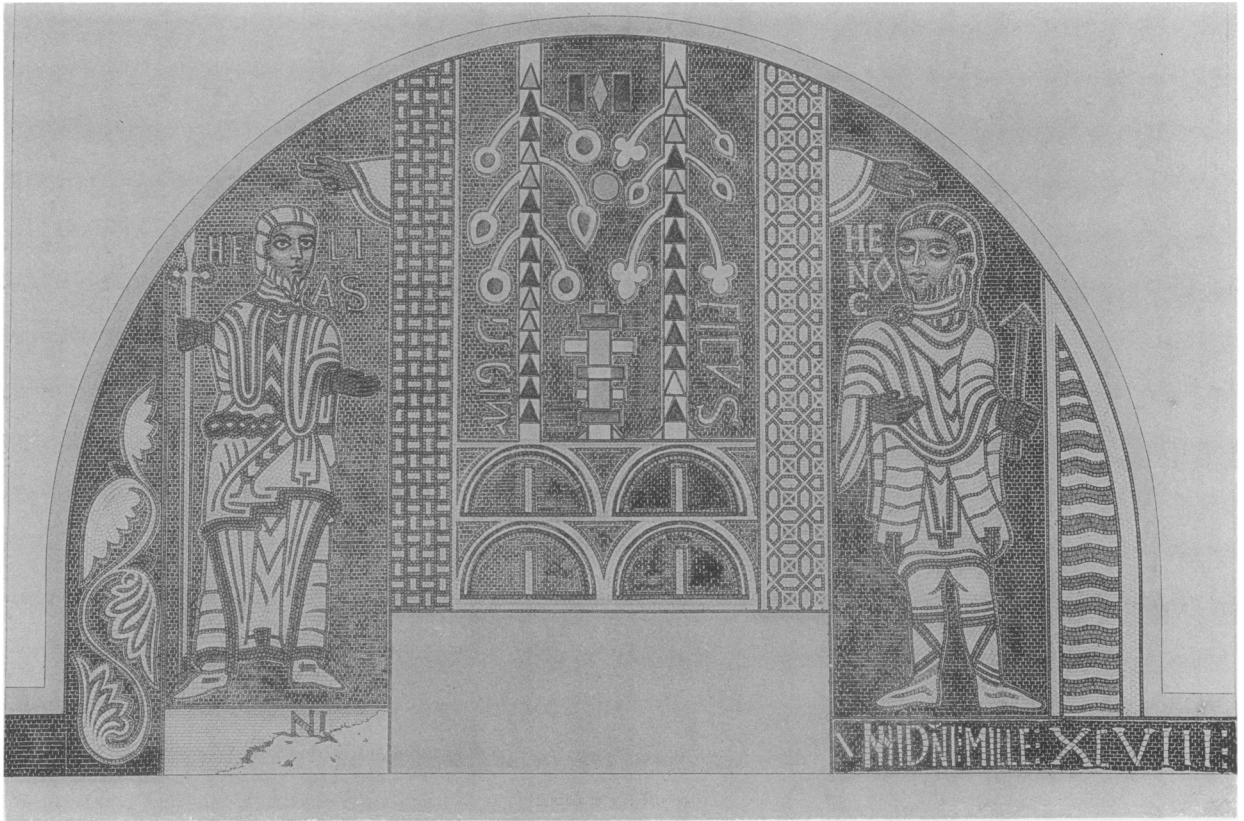
32. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Chapel south of narthex. Mosaic in nave



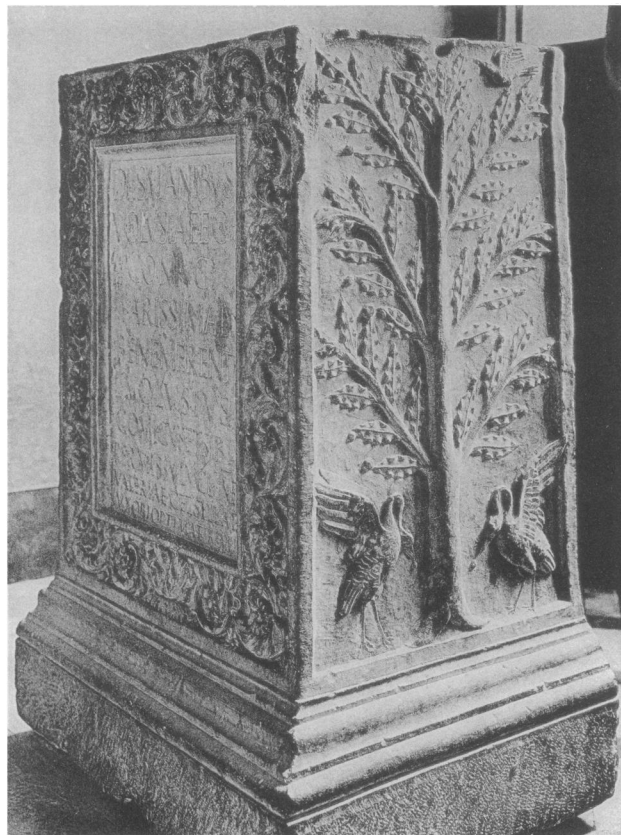
33. Nikopolis. Hall south of Basilica B (cf. Figures 15, 16). Mosaic with inscription of Bishop Alkison (†A. D. 516). Detail



34. Nikopolis. St. Demetrius. Atrium. Mosaic with inscription of Bishop Dometios II. Detail



35. Cruas, Ardèche. Abbey Church. Mosaic in apse



36. Paris. Louvre. Roman funerary altar

only compositionally but also thematically. It differs, however, from its later descendants through the fact that, in spite of the heraldic confrontation of the paired animals, there is an attempt to construct a "real" landscape with ground on which the animals stand and on which the trees grow, and with additional trees, and even birds, filling the background. The Antioch mosaic, the Nikopolis panel, and the later Transjordanian group seem to reflect three successive stages in a process whereby an increasingly rigid pattern was imposed on an originally realistic design.

Such an evolution undoubtedly did take place in art between the fourth and the sixth centuries. Nevertheless, a model of the kind of the *Philia* mosaic, plus a general antinaturalistic tendency in the art of the period, are hardly sufficient to explain the Nikopolis panel. It has new elements foreign to the Antiochene mosaic but known from other contexts. Such an element is the use of cypress trees as a frame motif.⁶⁰ Another is the insertion of a small bird (or perhaps two?) among the flowers at the foot of the trees. There is an alarming lack of balance and proportion between this "partridge" in the center and the two monumental "geese" on either side. We seem to be confronted with elements from different contexts which have been merged into a not altogether organic whole. The natural context for the little bird among the flowers would seem to be a small frieze such as we find on a floor of the "Constantinian villa" at Antioch.⁶¹ He has been introduced in our mosaic to break the rigidity of what is basically a heraldic composition.

The heraldic type of landscape with two large birds flanking a tree has, in fact, its own tradition side by side with that of the more realistic landscape. A stylized laurel tree with two swans, cranes, or other large birds placed symmetrically at its foot is a favorite design on the narrow sides of Roman funerary altars (Fig. 36).⁶² It is on this classical ornamental compo-

⁶⁰ Cf. a mosaic pavement in the apse of a small chapel excavated beneath the church of St. Sophia in Sofia: B. D. Filov, *The Church of St. Sophia in Sofia* (in Bulgarian), Sofia, 1913, p. 49, fig. 35 and pl. 18,1; S. Pokrovsky in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, V, 1932, pl. 17,2. Filov (pp. 54 f.) assumed that the apse belonged to the same room in which the pavement illustrated in his pl. 19 was found. He thought that this pavement could be dated through coin finds in the early years of Constantine the Great (p. 58). Pokrovsky — somewhat surprisingly — retains Filov's date (pp. 248 f.), although his own excavations revealed the fact that the apse mosaic did not belong together with the floor dated through Filov's coin find, but with another floor of entirely different character (*Sem. Kond.*, pl. 17,1). The apse mosaic with the cypress trees is probably later than the Constantinian period, in spite of the discovery of two coins of Constantine in the filling above Pokrovsky's newly found nave floor (*ibid.*, p. 248).

⁶¹ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II, pls. 62 f. Levi, *op. cit.*, pls. 60 f.

⁶² W. Altmann, *Die römischen Grabaltäre der Kaiserzeit*, Berlin, 1905, figs. 102, 104, 126. P. Gusman, *L'art décoratif de Rome*, II, Paris, n.d., pl. 62.

sition rather than on realistic or semirealistic landscape prototypes that the design of our landscape is based. The relationship between the Nikopolis mosaic and the Roman reliefs is strengthened further by the fact that the latter usually also show smaller birds alighting on the top of the tree as do some of the birds flying in the "sky" on the mosaic.

In essence therefore the composition of our panel consists of an alignment of stylized trees,⁶³ with two large birds heraldically confronted at their base and other small birds on top. In a panel in the nave of our basilica this classical pattern, known from the Roman *cippi*, appears in its pure form.⁶⁴ On the transept floor it was enriched by other conventional motifs (paired cypress trees, small birds among flowers), evidently for the purpose of increasing the "density" of the scene and of achieving a semblance of a "real" landscape of the Prima Porta type. This is not an emasculated descendant of an illusionistic type of landscape which had lost its three-dimensionality in the course of endless repetition during the centuries of late antiquity, but an attempt to create something *like* a Hellenistic landscape by means of a clever combination of conventional, and in themselves abstract, ornamental motifs.⁶⁵ What the artist did was to create, as it were, synthetically, a panel picture, an *emblema*, in the classical sense. This is an important fact the significance of which will be commented on in the third part of these studies.

An analysis of the framework with which the landscape is surrounded leads to the same conclusion. Elaborate multiple frames are frequently used to set off the *emblemata* on pavements of the Roman period.⁶⁶ The influence of these classical pavements is particularly evident in the ornamental motifs used for the two inner frames. The running spiral or wave crest is one of the

⁶³ Cf. also the alignment of individual trees, as distinct from the Prima Porta "forest" or orchard, on the walls of a tomb chamber at Djel-el-Amad in Syria (D. le Lasseur in *Syria*, 3, 1922, pp. 14 ff. and pl. 2b) and in a panel depicting paradise on the world map of Cosmas Indicopleustes (C. Stornajolo, *Le Miniature della Topografia Cristiana di Cosma Indicopleuste*, *Codice Vaticano Greco* 699, Milan, 1908, pl. 7). Neither of these compositions includes birds — though in the Syrian tomb there are birds on the ceiling "above" the trees — but smaller plants and flowers grow between the stems of the trees.

⁶⁴ Philadelphus 1917, p. 57, fig. 12. Cf. above, p. 86.

⁶⁵ The previously mentioned decoration of St. Sergius in Gaza (cf. above, n. 54) included in the lateral apses ever-burgeoning trees, a pitcher of water, and a host of birds including a flock of partridges (Choricus, *op. cit.*, I, 32 f.; ed. Teubner, pp. 10 f.). It is not possible, of course, to decide whether this was a genuine descendant of the Prima Porta tradition or a conventional and "synthetic" design as in Nikopolis. The latter is perhaps the more likely alternative; for the pitcher cf. Altmann, *op. cit.*, p. 126, fig. 102.

⁶⁶ Cf., e.g., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II, pl. 78, no. 99; III, pl. 52, no. 114; pl. 72, no. 146. Levi, *op. cit.*, pls. 7c, 20c, 23a, 33b, and *passim*.

most common of all devices used in borders of *emblemata*.⁶⁷ The bead-and-reel is much less common on pavements, but its most frequent use is also in the frames of *emblemata*⁶⁸ and the small size and sober rendering of the motif as found at Nikopolis is particularly characteristic of such frames.⁶⁹

The motifs used in the three outer borders are also well known and are frequently employed in frames. A ribbon of interlacing circles with birds forms the frame of a pavement with circus scenes at Gafsa.⁷⁰ Broad frames with fish and fishing scenes also occur in North Africa and elsewhere.⁷¹ The outermost frame with its meander pattern occurs in similar form in Palestine and Transjordan.⁷²

⁶⁷ R. P. Hinks, *Catalogue of the Greek, Etruscan and Roman Paintings and Mosaics in the British Museum*, London, 1933, p. lix. Levi, *op. cit.*, index, s.v. "patterns of decoration: waves"; and plates, *passim*.

⁶⁸ Hinks, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁹ Cf. a mosaic at Chebba (*Inventaire des Mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique*, II, Paris, 1910, no. 86, pl.) and another at Delos (*Monuments Piot*, 14, 1908, pls. 12–13), where the motif is combined with running spirals. A pavement in Hungary, however, shows a small-scale bead-and-reel motif used in a geometric field design (*Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana*, II, Rome, 1948, pp. 51 ff., figs. 3, 4, 6, 8–12).

⁷⁰ *Inventaire*, II, no. 321, pl. Cf. also the borders of pavements in the narthex of the Episcopal Church at Stobi (*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 3, 1946, figs. 145 ff.) and in a room of the "palace" adjoining the basilica at Herakleia-Bitolj (*Umjetnichki Pregled*, October 1939, p. 232). The birds at Nikopolis have ribbons fluttering from their necks and thus recall those on the border of a pavement from Antioch at Dumbarton Oaks (*Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, III, pl. 51, no. 112. Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 85d; *ibid.*, pp. 482 f. on this motif in general); for this pavement see also below, p. 113.

⁷¹ Cf. pavements at Djemila (*Inventaire*, III, 1911, no. 293, pl.) and Lyon (Ph. Fabia, *Mosaïques Romaines des Musées de Lyon*, Lyon, 1923, pp. 113 ff.; *Recherches sur les Mosaïques Romaines de Lyon*, Lyon, 1924, fig. 12). At Nikopolis the theme is rendered as a compact frieze of every variety of fish interrupted only by a few figures of nude, or nearly nude, fishermen, which fill the entire width of the frame. This particular type has parallels in metalwork (cf. L. Matzulewitsch, *Byzantinische Antike*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1929, p. 68): a silver casserole with stamps of Heraclius in the Hermitage, also with a fisherman armed with a harpoon, comparable to the figure on the south side of our mosaic (*ibid.*, pls. 13–15; cf. our Fig. 19); a bronze bowl from Porto d'Anzio in the British Museum (H. B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Bronzes in the British Museum*, London, 1899, p. 164, fig. 25); a bronze casserole reproduced by R. Garrucci, *Storia dell'Arte Cristiana*, VI, Prato, 1880, pl. 461, 1–3; and a silver casserole from Cherchel in the Louvre with stamps of Justinian (*Bulletin Archéologique*, 1893, pp. 83 ff. and pl. X). All these friezes include variants of the well-known motif of the fisherman seated on a rock, a motif which is depicted on the east side of our pavement. An interesting parallel in mosaic to our type of marine frieze is on a fragment in the Stoclet Collection in Brussels (H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *L'art byzantin*, II, Paris, 1934, pl. 157; G. Duthuit and F. Volbach, *Art Byzantin*, Paris, n.d., pl. 70). But this is altogether so close to the work at Nikopolis that it must be considered a product of the same school; thus it does not provide independent evidence for the use of the type on pavements.

⁷² E.g. at Tabgha (A. M. Schneider, *The Church of the Multiplying of the Loaves and Fishes*, London, 1937, pl. 24); Gerasa (*Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, edited by C. H. Kraeling, New Haven, 1938, pls. 73, 74a, b, 76a, b, 84b); Deir Daghlah (*Burlington Magazine*, 1919, I, p. 144); Madaba (*Izvestija of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople*, VIII, 1903, pl. V).

But what is unusual is the combination of these three outer frames with the conventional spiral and bead-and-reel borders. Rows of interlacing circles and meanders with squares, though conventional enough in themselves, do not belong to the traditional framework of *emblemata*. Broad frames with a free-style design do occur in this capacity but are normally joined to the central panel either directly or else with only a single narrow motif as an intermediary.⁷³ Here the broad marine frieze is separated from the *emblema* by no less than four intermediate elements. The artist at Nikopolis added to the conventional bead-and-reel and spiral borders of the *emblema* a broad free-style frieze, which has, so to speak, its own inner and outer borders of conventional designs, and separated the inner border of the frieze from the outer border of the *emblema* by a plain dark ribbon. Again, as in the analysis of the central panel, we seem to discern an eclectic mind, which combined various conventional elements to produce a semblance rather than a true descendant of a classical formula.

But the purpose was not simply a hyperbolic accumulation of old decorative devices. The pavement as a whole has a specific content which we must now consider.

Had the floor been found without its inscription, archaeologists probably would have interpreted the landscape panel as a representation of paradise. This is the explanation usually proffered for representations of the same kind when they occur in a church.⁷⁴ The inscription, however, with which Bishop Dometios has provided the panel at Nikopolis (Fig. 18),⁷⁵ tells us that in this case the meaning is altogether different.

Ὀκεανὸν περίφαντον ἀπίριτον ἔνθα δέδορκας
γαίαν μέσσον ἔχοντα σοφοῖς ἠδ' ἀλάμασι τέχνης
πάντα πέριξ φορέουσιν ὅσα πνίει τε καὶ ἔρπει
Δουμετίου κτέανον μεγαθύμου ἀρχιερέως.

⁷³ Cf., e.g., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, III, pl. 52, no. 114; pl. 77, no. 160 (also in Levi, *op. cit.*, pls. 33b, 71a).

⁷⁴ Cf. A. Gnirs in *Jahrbuch des kunsthistorischen Institutes der K.K. Zentralkommission für Denkmalspflege*, 9, 1915, p. 153, a propos of the frescoes of the south church at Aquileia (see above, n. 51); R. Egger, *Frühchristliche Kirchenbauten im südlichen Norikum*, Vienna, 1916, p. 50, a propos of a tree and birds on a mosaic at Theurnia; S. Pokrovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 248, on the "landscape" in a chapel beneath St. Sophia in Sofia (see above, n. 60); Saller, *op. cit.*, p. 232, n. 1, on a previously quoted panel in the baptistery on Mount Nebo (see above, pp. 95 f.).

⁷⁵ Philadelphus 1916, p. 67. Chatzes in *Ἀρχαιολ. Ἐφημερίς*, 1918, p. 29.

Here you see the famous and boundless ocean
 Containing in its midst the earth
 Bearing round about in the skillful images of art everything that
 breathes and creeps ⁷⁶
 The foundation of Dometios, the greathearted archpriest.

The beholder is asked to look upon the landscape panel as a representation of the earth "with everything that breathes and creeps" and to accept the fish frieze as a picture of the all-embracing ocean. The floor is intended to convey nothing less than a view of the entire earth.

Inscriptions — as distinct from simple labels — on floor mosaics are usually of a dedicatory or a generally laudatory or moralizing nature. Rarely are they charged with the function of interpreting for the beholder the subject matter represented.⁷⁷ The verses on our mosaic constitute an exceptional case and indicate that even the contemporaries of Bishop Dometios

⁷⁶ "ὅσα πνίει τε καὶ ἔρπει" is a quotation from Homer (*Il.* XVII, 447; *Od.*, XVIII, 131). There is nothing particularly surprising about the use of a Homeric phrase in a Christian context in the sixth century. Already in the time of Julian biblical books had been paraphrased in heroic meter (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.*, 3, 16; Sozomenos, *Hist. eccl.*, V, 18). In the fifth century Nonnos wrote a metric paraphrase of the fourth Gospel with numerous Homeric reminiscences (cf. J. Golega, *Studien über die Evangeliendichtung des Nonnos von Panopolis*, Breslau, 1930, pp. 52 f., n. 1) and the learned Empress Eudokia, together with Bishop Patrikios, made up an entire Life of Christ from Homeric quotations (Eudocia Augusta etc., *Carmina*, ed. A. Ludwich, Leipzig, 1897, pp. 79 ff.). Words or phrases from Homer may be found in Christian metric inscriptions from the fourth century on; cf. examples in Syria at Anasarthra (L. Jalabert and R. Mousterde, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*, II, Paris, 1939, pp. 168 ff., no. 297; L. Robert, *Hellenica*, IV, Paris, 1948, pp. 136 f.), Serdjilla (*Revue Archéologique*, 1901, II, pp. 68 ff.), and Umm idj-Djimâl (*Syria: Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909*, Division III, Section A, Leyden, 1921, pp. 151 ff., no. 262; F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, VI, part 2, s.v. Homère; cf. also *ibid.* for an inscription from Hermopolis in Egypt which contains perhaps a Homeric quotation); in Asia Minor at Sengen in Phrygia (*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, I, ed. by W. M. Calder, London, 1928, pp. 198 f.), and in Greece at Tanagra (*Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς*, 1937, pp. 655 ff.; *Classical Review*, 62, no. 1, May 1948, pp. 8 ff.). I am indebted for some of these references to my colleague Glanville Downey. The use of a Homeric quotation in Dometios' epigram and the florid and archaic wording of all his inscriptions become significant only in conjunction with a number of other features of his mosaics which collectively give a clue to their artistic affiliations. Within the field of Christian pavement decoration poetic inscriptions are, in fact, particularly, though by no means exclusively, characteristic of sixth-century mosaics in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan, where they go together with other classicizing features. The varied connections between the work at Nikopolis and this Eastern group will be commented on in later sections of these studies.

⁷⁷ Two examples of interpretive inscriptions on mosaic pavements are given by P. Gauckler in Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines*, III, part 2, s.v. Musivum Opus, p. 2125 n. 2: *Inventaire*, II, no. 936; III, no. 318. Cf. also two hexameters referring to the seasons and accompanying a representation of the Four Seasons on a mosaic at Ravenna (G. Ghirardini in *Monumenti Antichi Pubblicati per cura della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, 24, 1916, cols. 788, 793 ff., figs. 24 ff., and pl. VIII).

could not be relied upon to grasp readily the meaning with which familiar motifs had been invested in this instance.⁷⁸ Even they perhaps would have taken the landscape as a representation of paradise.⁷⁹ Conversely they probably would have expected earth and ocean to be depicted in the manner in which they were most commonly represented in late antique and early Christian art, namely, by means of personifications.⁸⁰ The Nikopolis floor, then, is altogether exceptional. It represents earth and ocean, as it were, realistically, that is to say, by means of objects belonging to their respective spheres and it depicts these objects in what was evidently thought to be their real relationship.

The geographic concept underlying this representation is a familiar one and goes back to the earliest period of Greek thought.⁸¹ In the Homeric poems the ocean is thought of as a river encircling the earth on all sides.⁸²

⁷⁸ For the descriptive and interpretive epigram as a literary genre favored particularly in late Greek poetry, and for its successor, the Christian *titulus*, cf. P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1912, pp. 55 ff.; also A. Mattson, *Untersuchungen zur Epigrammsammlung des Agathias*, Lund, 1942, pp. 79 ff. J. v. Schlosser (*Quellenbuch zur Kunstgeschichte des abendländischen Mittelalters*, Vienna, 1896, pp. x f.) saw a basic difference between the classical epigram and the Christian *titulus* in the fact that only the latter is an essential and integral part of the work of art to which the verses refer. Form is no longer self-sufficient and must be supplemented by words. This is certainly true of our pavement — its meaning would be quite unintelligible without the poem — but it may be true also of certain pre-Christian epigrams (cf. examples in books III, IX, and XVI of the Greek Anthology). Ours is a rare case of a descriptive epigram referring to an extant pictorial representation and associated with it from the beginning. Other such epigrams which read like mere “literature” might be found to be equally closely integrated with their pictorial subjects, had they come down to us in their original context. No. 778 in Book IX of the Anthology is a descriptive epigram quite closely comparable to ours in subject matter and referring to a representation on a tapestry. These verses, however, can hardly have formed an integral part of the work of art itself; cf. C. Cichorius, *Römische Studien*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1922, pp. 351 ff.

⁷⁹ Cf. the row of trees denoting paradise on Cosmas’ world map; see above n. 63. But cf. also below, n. 108, for the possibility that there was another tradition of symbolism associating trees and birds with the earth.

⁸⁰ “Okeanos” and “Ge” occur in countless examples and are frequently juxtaposed (cf. W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, I, cols. 1584 f.). For both there is a strong tradition in pavement decoration (for Okeanos see *Inventaire*, I, 1909, 376; II, 449; III, 318; Hinks, *op. cit.*, nos. 15, 37d; for Ge see Levi, *op. cit.*, Index, s.v. Ge; *Revue Biblique*, 1922, pl. VIII, 2), a tradition which was not rejected by Christian church builders; cf. a bust of Ge on the pavement of the Church of Priest John at El-Muhayet (Saller and Bagatti, *The Town of Nebo*, pls. 9, 1; 10, 2) and probably another — with inscription now lacking — in St. George (*ibid.*, pl. 22, 3); also a bust of “Thalassa” in the Church of the Apostles at Madaba (*Revue Biblique*, 11, 1902, p. 599). The tradition seems to have survived even in Islamic art; cf. a painted floor recently discovered at Kasr el-Heir with a bust probably representing Ge (D. Schlumberger in *Syria*, 25, 1946–48, pp. 93 ff., 99, and pl. A facing p. 88).

⁸¹ Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, XVII, cols. 2308 ff., s.v. *Okeanos*.

⁸² *Ibid.*, cols. 2312 f.

Herodotus in a well-known passage⁸³ ridicules the early Greek map designers for drawing the world round, as if fashioned by a compass, and encircled by the river of ocean. Rejected by critical minds in the classical period of Greek scientific exploration, which Herodotus inaugurated, the concept of an all-embracing ocean nevertheless survived throughout classical antiquity in mystic and religious as well as popular and poetic circles⁸⁴ and was promoted even by scholars like Eratosthenes, Poseidonius, and Strabo.⁸⁵ It should be noted that all these scholars possessed knowledge of the sphericity of the earth so that the concept of the ocean girdling the earth need not necessarily be assumed to entail that of the earth as a flat disk. However, the idea of a flat earth likewise survived throughout the classical period and was commonly held on the popular level. The Romans particularly, less interested than the Greeks in theoretical speculation, gave renewed currency both to the notion of a flat earth and to that of an ocean surrounding the earth on all sides,⁸⁶ and this is the view most commonly adopted by Christian writers.⁸⁷ Dometios' pavement thus reflects both poetic tradition⁸⁸ and a popular cosmological concept of the period.⁸⁹

The vehicle which the artist used in order to express this concept visually was, as we have seen, the framed *emblema*. The field is filled with objects pertaining to land, the principal frame with creatures of the sea, and the beholder is asked to take the relationship between picture and frame, which usually is a purely decorative one, quite literally as a representation of one object surrounding another. Such literal use of the frame motif is not without precedent in mosaic pavements. *Emblemata* depicting Theseus' battle with the Minotaur were quite often placed in a framework of meander-like ornaments clearly intended to represent the labyrinth "inside" which the scene takes place.⁹⁰ Cumont has suggested that the famous topographic

⁸³ IV, 36. Cf. Loeb ed., II, p. 234.

⁸⁴ Roscher, *op. cit.*, VI, col. 455; cf., e.g., Orphic fragment, Kern 115, and the Orphic hymns XI, 15; LXXXIII, 3.

⁸⁵ Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.*, cols. 2329 f., 2332 f.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, cols. 2336-2338.

⁸⁷ Cf., e.g., Eusebius, *De Laud. Const.*, VI (Migne, PG, 20, col. 1344C); Orosius, *Hist.* I, 2 (Migne, PL, 31, col. 672); also Cosmas' concept of the world as illustrated graphically in his maps (see above, n. 63).

⁸⁸ For a late example cf. John of Gaza's description of a "Cosmic Pinax," I, 272 ff. (P. Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 147).

⁸⁹ Weigand (in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 40, 1940, p. 543) justly criticizes Pelekanides for speaking of a "globe" in connection with the Nikopolis pavement.

⁹⁰ Cf. a mosaic in Pompeii reproduced by E. Pernice, *Pavimente und figürliche Mosaiken* (*Die hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, VI), Berlin, 1938, pls. 9, 3; 75, 2. Others are in Salzburg (Daremberg and Saglio, *op. cit.*, III, part 2, p. 2100; R. Noll, *Kunst der Römerzeit in Österreich*, Salzburg, 1949, figs. 48 f.) and in Cormerod (S. Reinach, *Répertoire de Peintures*, p. 214, 4).

border with views of Antioch on a floor at Yakto serves the purpose of indicating that the *venationes* depicted in the field take place "inside" the city.⁹¹ We may also refer to a general tendency, apparent already in the Roman period, to find visual equivalents for cosmographic concepts in conventional pictorial patterns.⁹² The framed *emblema* was an obvious device for the representation of the particular concept to which Dometios' floor was dedicated.

Yet it may be doubted whether a purely theoretical concept on the one hand and a craftsman's stock of patterns on the other would have been enough to produce our mosaic. The departure from the conventional way of depicting earth and ocean seems too radical. It becomes much more readily understandable if we assume the existence of an intermediate link in the shape of a map or a diagram of the world. The rejection of the usual allegories, the concentration on a "scientific" concept and the tangible way of expressing this concept through "real" objects in their "real" relationship, all these factors find a plausible and simultaneous explanation in the theory that the artist was inspired by works of cartography.⁹³

It is difficult to prove the existence of a late antique *mappa mundi* of precisely the kind our floor seems to presuppose. The model, if model there was, would have to show the earth as a square and with a clearly defined

⁹¹ F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Paris, 1942, p. 441, n. 1; for this floor see also below, pp. 112 f. There are, however, other frames with topographic representations which are not intended to "surround" literally the subjects depicted in the field; cf. the pavement in the nave of the church at Ma'in (*Revue Biblique*, 47, 1938, pp. 234 ff.), a textile with the story of Daniel in Berlin (J. Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom*, Leipzig, 1901, pl. IV) and also the numerous Hellenistic and Roman pavements with frames in the form of turreted walls (for references see F. M. Biebel in *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, p. 344, n. 19).

⁹² J. Baltrusaitis, *Cosmographies Chrétiennes dans l'art du Moyen-Age*, Paris, 1939, pp. 17 ff.

⁹³ The "real" relationship between earth and ocean might have been represented partly, or even wholly, through traditional anthropomorphic images, had the artist desired to use these; cf. a bronze disk in the British Museum, which has been interpreted as Okeanos "embracing" the three Continents (R. Hinks, *Myth and Allegory in Ancient Art*, London, 1939, pp. 30 f. and pl. 1b; *ibid.*, pp. 16, 32, 80, and *passim* for general observations on "complex" or "genuine" allegory in Graeco-Roman art with its "transposition of natural relationships . . . into a sequence of anthropomorphic metaphors"). More pertinent to the Nikopolis pavement both in point of date and decorative function is a silk fragment from the tomb of St. Cuthbert in Durham, which shows a female bust of the type commonly used for Gaia emerging from a seascape with ducks and fishes (*Burlington Magazine*, 88, 1946, p. 247, fig. A). This may well be a semianthropomorphic rendering of "Earth surrounded by Ocean" (cf. above, n. 78 for an epigram referring to a representation of this subject on a tapestry; for another reference to a textile with the same subject cf. A. B. Cook in *Folklore*, 1904, pp. 293 f.). The fact that the mosaicist at Nikopolis rejected anthropomorphism altogether strongly suggests that he was open to influences other than those of the conventional repertoire of the decorative artist.

ocean frame. Some of the medieval derivatives of late antique maps are square in shape but the ocean is not rendered as a clearly defined frame.⁹⁴ When the ocean does take the form of a real frame — a form which emphasizes its function as a belt around the earth — the outline of the map is usually circular, just as in literature the notion of the all-embracing ocean is most frequently associated with that of a circle.⁹⁵ The maps in the manuscripts of Beatus' Commentary on the Apocalypse, which are nearly all circular or oval, illustrate this point well. The one instance of a rectangular map in a Beatus manuscript is generally believed to be an exception and not, in that respect, a faithful copy of the late antique original on which these maps are presumed to be based.⁹⁶ A world map with an ocean frame which certainly was rectangular from the outset is that of Cosmas Indicopleustes. But in this case there is a particular reason for the rectangular shape, namely, Cosmas' contention that the world resembles in structure the Jewish tabernacle; for that same reason his world must be an oblong and not a square as in Nikopolis.⁹⁷ Cosmas' authority, Ephoros, also visualized the earth as an oblong.⁹⁸ Of all antique maps and their derivatives known to us the one which in its general shape comes closest to the kind of world picture the Nikopolis mosaic presupposes is a sketch in a Carolingian manuscript of Orosius.⁹⁹ Here the earth is a regular square surrounded by the ocean which is rendered in the form of a frame. But this may be merely a simplification of the kind of square map previously alluded to¹⁰⁰ and, according to one theory at least, the original prototype of Orosius' map is likely to have been circular rather than square.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Cf. the Albi map (C. R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, I, London, 1897, pl. facing p. 385); the Cotton Map (*ibid.*, II, 1901, pl. facing p. 560). As K. Miller says (*Mappaemundi*, VI, Stuttgart, 1898, p. 146), in these cases the squareness of the map merely expresses uncertainty as to the ocean's limits.

⁹⁵ Cf. already the early Ionian maps as described by Herodotus in a passage referred to above, n. 83.

⁹⁶ New York, Morgan Library, Ms. 644 (formerly coll. Earl of Ashburnham); cf. Beazley, *op. cit.*, I, pl. facing p. 388, II, p. 552; Miller, *op. cit.*, I, 1895, p. 27; W. Neuss, *Die Apokalypse des Hl. Johannes in der altspanischen und altchristlichen Bibelillustration*, I, Münster i.W., 1931, pp. 64 f.

⁹⁷ Cf. Cosmas' map (see above, n. 63) and the text of his *Christian Topography* (ed. E. O. Winstedt, Cambridge, 1909) *passim*, especially Book II.

⁹⁸ Cf. his diagram of the world as reproduced by Cosmas (Stornajolo, *op. cit.*, pl. 3) and Cosmas' quotation from his writings (Winstedt, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 f.). See also W. A. Heidel, *The Frame of the Ancient Greek Maps*, New York, 1937, pp. 16 ff.

⁹⁹ St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Ms. 621, f. 35. Miller, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 62, fig. 28; Yousouf Kamal, *Monumenta Cartographica Africae et Aegypti*, III, 1, Cairo, 1930, pl. 514.

¹⁰⁰ See above, n. 94.

¹⁰¹ Miller, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 64; the author bases his view on Orosius' own text ("*orbem totius terrae oceani limbo circumseptum*," Hist. I, 2). The opposite view is defended by R. Uhden in *Geographische Zeitschrift*, 37, 1931, pp. 321 ff.

Cartography may, however, have been a general rather than a specific source of inspiration of Dometios' pavement. Perhaps the composition can be understood best as a conflation of *mappa mundi* and framed *emblema* or as an artist's paraphrase of a cartographer's diagram. We have seen that the designs on the *emblema* as well as those on the frame belong to the artist's traditional repertoire. But we have also seen that as a framed *emblema* the composition is somewhat unorthodox. Its hybrid nature becomes intelligible once we realize that center panel and frame are an artist's imitation of the two principal components of a world map both elaborated ornamentally.

The choice of subjects inside the *emblema* and on its principal frame is also explicable through the influence of cartography. Map designers of late antiquity were in the habit of entering upon the "ground plan" of a given place or region views of details which were thought to be characteristic of its real appearance. The Peutinger Table¹⁰² and the mosaic map at Madaba¹⁰³ both illustrate this practice. Medieval world maps such as those contained in the Beatus manuscripts may give us an idea of the kind of map which inspired our artist. They show the earth characterized by means of landscape elements and the ocean frame populated with fish and other details of marine life.¹⁰⁴ But here again the influence of cartography is generic rather than specific. The mosaicist refrained from providing his "map" with any scientific details such as the continents. Instead he composed it as a single landscape view with its own ornamental border.

The existence of the Madaba mosaic just referred to lends additional plausibility to the assumption that our artist was influenced by cartography. Here is a church floor of the same general period and produced by a school with which the mosaicist at Nikopolis had much in common;¹⁰⁵ its decoration consists of a fullfledged geographic map. While the Nikopolis floor represents a relatively timid attempt to use cartography in the decoration, at Madaba the same idea was carried out more boldly and on a much more ambitious scale.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² E. Desjardins, *La table de Peutinger*, Paris, 1869–1874.

¹⁰³ P. Palmer and Dr. Guthe, *Die Mosaikkarte von Madaba*, Leipzig, 1906.

¹⁰⁴ Miller, *op. cit.*, II, pls. 2–9; Beazley, *op. cit.*, I, pl. facing p. 388; II, pls. facing pp. 550, 552, 554; Neuss, *op. cit.*, pls. 48–51.

¹⁰⁵ These connections will be discussed in subsequent parts of these studies; cf. also above, nn. 52–56 and 76.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. my preliminary remarks on the increasingly strong "scientific" element in Christian floor decoration of the sixth century in a paper read at the Sixth International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Paris, 1948), a paper to be published in the Acts of that congress. The subject will be discussed more fully in Part Two of the present studies. It is possible, or even probable, that there were precedents for floor maps in pagan and secular art. Certain comprehensive bird's-eye views of landscapes on pavements of the Roman era have been thought to

Once it is recognized that the landscape and the aquatic subjects on Dometios' pavement play the role of symbols on a map of the world, it is easier to understand what may otherwise seem an almost ludicrous discrepancy between the grandiose words of the inscription and the actual representation. The verses claim that the mosaic depicts everything that breathes and creeps. Actually organic life is restricted to the representation of a few birds and trees. But symbols on maps are often selective. A few buildings, or even a single building, may stand for an entire city.¹⁰⁷ What really represents the earth on the mosaic is the central field itself. The objects depicted within this field are merely stenographic signs.¹⁰⁸

One final observation remains to be made. A representation of a cartographic nature is doubly meaningful when placed on a floor. The earth is quite literally spread out beneath our feet. The floor becomes an exact counterpart to ceiling decorations suggesting or depicting the sky.¹⁰⁹ It is true that in our particular case the illusion of actually stepping on the earth is not very strong because of the lack of detail on the "map." But the person entering the room was induced to yield to illusion at least to the extent of "crossing" the outer "ocean" before reaching "land." Having reached the middle of the floor he found himself standing in the center of the earth and

represent specific areas, and if this is true they come close to being maps (cf. O. Marucchi in *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, Series IV, vol. 23, 1895, p. 31, and vol. 32, 1904, pp. 251, 272, on the Nilotic mosaics at Palestrina; P. Gauckler, *Inventaire*, II, p. 301 no. 936 on a seascape at Sidi-Abdallah; F. G. de Pachtère in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 31, 1911, p. 331, on a harbor view at Hippo). In any case, the distinction between bird's-eye views and maps was probably fluid (cf. P. Gauckler in Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, III, Pt. 2, p. 2120; Biebel in *Gerasa*, pp. 341 ff.; Levi, *op. cit.*, pp. 334 f.). For a proper diagrammatic plan on a Roman floor mosaic cf. *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 13, 1936, pl. 27, 1. I may also refer, by way of analogy, to representations of the "dome of heaven" in classical and early medieval art. K. Lehmann (in *Art Bulletin*, 27, 1945, pp. 1 ff.) has found the "scientific" and descriptive image (i.e. the astronomical or astrological chart) to be one of the basic types of or elements in the representation of heaven in the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods, side by side with personifications and symbols (*ibid.*, pp. 4 f.). In the later imperial era the descriptive element recedes in favor of "an increasing preoccupation with a well established cosmic order, a certain tendency toward systematic illustration of that comprehensive order, and a formally correlated centralization" (*ibid.*, p. 9), but the fresco in the dome of the caldarium at Quseir Amra proves the survival (or revival?) of the "scientific" approach in subsequent centuries (*ibid.*, p. 25 and fig. 65).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the maps quoted in nn. 102, 103, above.

¹⁰⁸ The choice of a landscape of the "Prima Porta" type as a map symbol for the earth is perhaps not fortuitous. Already Varro in his description of an aviary seems to have intended trees and birds as a symbolic representation of the earth. This curious structure was built in such a way that birds, enclosed in unobtrusive cages, were seen against a background of trees; there was a "dome of heaven" above and water below (Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum Libri Tres*, ed. H. Keil, Leipzig, 1889, pp. 133 ff.; Lehmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 f.).

¹⁰⁹ Lehmann, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

looking out towards the ocean all around him. The room as a whole was turned into a reproduction of the world.¹¹⁰ To convey this meaning is the real function of our pavement. This must surely be the explanation of what seems a very surprising absence of any religious note in the inscription. There is no basis for any interpretation of the mosaic which imputes to it a direct religious message.¹¹¹ Its function is simply that of equating the floor with the earth, and this is all the inscription conveys. The mosaic does not preach anything, it merely represents the earth and thus gives the room in which it is placed cosmic significance.

4. THE HUNTING PAVEMENT (Figs. 20–22, 25–27)

Little need to be said about the two outer borders of the composition in the south wing. Both the meander ornament skirting the walls and the marine frieze adjoining it are identical with the corresponding borders in the north wing which have been discussed above.¹¹² The single broad band with hunting scenes, however, which here takes the place of the succession of narrow borders inside the marine frieze of the northern floor, requires a more detailed analysis. This band forms a proper and organic frame of the central *emblema*, from which it is separated only by a row of crowsteps, a common motif frequently used in the framework of *emblemata*.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Cf. particularly the four-cornered world of Cosmas with its four walls and ceiling (Stornajolo, *op. cit.*, pls. 6, 10; see, however, above, n. 97, for the necessarily oblong shape of his world). Much of Cosmas' theory goes back to Severianus of Gabala, who already visualized the world in the shape of a house (Migne, *P.G.*, 56, col. 433).

¹¹¹ Cf. Pelekanides, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), p. 114, where the mosaic is interpreted as a symbolical representation intended to demonstrate the goodness of God and His eternal love of his creatures. Such thoughts may have been in the minds of many worshipers who visited the church and saw the mosaic; but if they were foremost in the mind of Bishop Dometios the verses he chose would be most inappropriate, since they do not mention God at all. Already in 1931 C. W. Vollgraff had pointed the way toward a correct appreciation of the Nikopolitan pavement and related floor mosaics (*Mededeelingen der K. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde*, Deel 72, Serie B, no. 3, 1931, p. 48). It is not an isolated picture which might have been placed equally well on a wall or a ceiling. There is an intimate connection between the content of the mosaic and its location on the floor.

¹¹² Cf. p. 99. The fishermen included in the marine frieze are again shown in conventional poses. We find once more a man seated on a rock (cf. above, n. 71), though in this instance he holds a net rather than a rod (Philadelphus 1916, p. 68 and fig. 22 top right, our fig. 27). Two others can be matched in the metal friezes quoted in n. 71 (compare the men with net and rod reproduced by Philadelphus 1916, figs. 16 and 19, with Matzulewitsch, *op. cit.*, pls. 14 top and 15 top). The fourth is a youth trying to catch a large waterbird with his hands (fig. 27). Though not known from the friezes in metalwork, this figure is also conventional; cf., e.g., W. de Gruneisen, *Les caractéristiques de l'art Copte*, Florence, 1922, pl. 51. For the names with which two of the figures are inscribed see below, n. 143.

¹¹³ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, *passim*, e.g., II, pl. 54, nos. 73–74; pl. 60, no. 84; pl. 78, nos. 99, 100; III, pl. 49, no. 107 A, B; pl. 65, no. 137; pl. 85, no. 175 A, B. *Inventaire*, I, nos. 44, 45, 47, etc.

Hunting scenes are among the motifs traditionally employed in the decoration of frames.¹¹⁴ Hunting scenes enveloped in scrolls are likewise traditional¹¹⁵ and occur frequently on sixth- and early seventh-century pavements.¹¹⁶ For the use of this design as a border we may quote a mosaic from Syria,¹¹⁷ a well-known pavement from Antioch now in Worcester (Figs. 24, 28–30),¹¹⁸ and the inner border of the floor in the nave of the basilica of Ma'in.¹¹⁹ Our rinceau with hunting scenes, however, has a number of peculiar characteristics. Perhaps the most striking is its unusually large size in relation to the panel it encloses. Rinceaux when used as frames of *emblemata* are not usually so wide.¹²⁰ In cases where we do find very large areas of foliage surrounding a central scene these areas are really parts of the composition, that is to say, the rinceau is not so much a frame as an all-over pattern with a vacant space in the center.¹²¹ It is evident then that our artist, while clearly separating the rinceau from the center panel, was anxious to give it an emphasis which goes beyond that accorded to an ordinary decorative border.

¹¹⁴ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, III, pl. 52, no. 114 (Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 33b), and the parallels quoted by Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 397. Cf. also *Revue Biblique*, 31, 1922, pls. 9, 10, and pp. 267 ff., figs. 2, 3 (Beit Jibrin).

¹¹⁵ Frieze at Palmyra (*Syria*, 15, 1934, pl. 21, 3; cf. Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 504). Mosaic pavement at Ostia (*Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1937, cols. 383 f.).

¹¹⁶ Beisan, El Hammam (*The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 5, 1936, pls. 14 ff.). Beisan, Monastery (G. M. Fitzgerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan*, Philadelphia, 1939, pl. 16). Kabr Hiram (E. Renan, *Mission en Phénicie*, Paris, 1864, pl. 49). Khirbet el-Muhayet, Churches of Priest John, SS. Lot and Procopius, St. George (Saller and Bagatti, *The Town of Nebo*, pls. 9 ff., 14 ff., 23 ff.). Gerasa, Church of Elias, Mary, and Soreg (*ibid.*, pls. 45; 51, fig. 1). For sculptured renderings of the motif during the same period cf. a frieze and archivolt in the Coptic Museum in Cairo (H. Zalusker in *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, 8, 1942, pp. 145 ff. and pls. I, II); also another frieze in the Museum of Chios (*Δελτίον Ἀρχαιολογικόν*, 2, 1916, *Παράρτημα*, p. 29 and pl. 4, fig. 1).

¹¹⁷ *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1900, p. 109.

¹¹⁸ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II, pls. 70 ff., no. 90 (Levi, *op. cit.*, pls. 90a, 144 b, c).

¹¹⁹ *Revue Biblique*, 47, 1938, pp. 237 f. and pl. 12. There are also some hunting incidents among the motifs in the acanthus border of the nave mosaic in the Church of Elias, Mary, and Soreg at Gerasa (Saller and Bagatti, *op. cit.*, pls. 46 ff. and pp. 280 ff.). Another example is at Nikopolis itself and, indeed, in a building immediately adjoining our basilica; cf. *Πρακτ.*, 1916, pp. 60 ff., and Philadelphus 1916, p. 122. *Πρακτ.*, 1924, p. 115, fig. 4, perhaps illustrates this mosaic, but there is no publication which would permit a judgment as to its chronological relation to the work of Dometios.

¹²⁰ Cf., e.g., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, I, 1934, p. 44, fig. 3; p. 47, fig. 9; III, pl. 62, no. 129B (Levi, *op. cit.*, pls. 1b, 2a, 45a). *Inventaire*, III, 133, 139 pls. The frames of the mosaics reproduced in *Antioch*, II, pl. 78, no. 100B (Levi, pl. 20a), and *Inventaire*, III, 179 pl., come closer to the proportion of ours but are still not as wide.

¹²¹ Cf. *Inventaire*, II, 142, 744, or — as an extreme case — 376; also the pavement of Sta. Costanza in Rome as recorded by P. S. Bartoli (*Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Serie III, Rendiconti*, 19, 1942–43, p. 296, fig. 9). In all these instances there is also a thematic connection between the representations in the rinceau and those in the center.

Let us now examine the scenes themselves. The hunters' quarry consists of eight animals which occupy every second of the sixteen convolutions of the rinceau. On the west side are a bear (Fig. 21) and a stag (Fig. 25), on the north side a deer (Fig. 27) and another bear or a wolf, on the east side a bull and a hyena and on the south side a boar and a cock (Fig. 26).¹²² It is curious to find that all except the last are depicted as half-length figures. Animals enveloped in the rich foliage of acanthus rinceaux are frequently shown with their hindquarters concealed among the leaves,¹²³ but animals enmeshed in vine rinceaux are usually shown full length.¹²⁴ In our case, where the scroll is exceedingly thin and wiry and its convolutions are very large indeed, the omission of the animals' hind parts is particularly surprising since this leaves a vacuum inside each circle. We are forced to conclude that the animals have been copied from a model which showed them enveloped in a rich acanthus scroll (or from a pattern book showing animals destined for inclusion in such a scroll) and that they have been brought together artificially and not too successfully with a rinceau of an entirely different type. It is the same synthetic method which we found had been used in the composition of the pavement in the opposite wing. Indeed, on closer inspection, the suspicion arises that the foliage itself may have been put together synthetically. Its two stems are smooth and flat bands interlaced in such a way as to form sixteen perfect circles. To these bands the short stalks of the vine leaves seem to be only superficially attached. We seem to be confronted with a basically geometric pattern which has been disguised as a vegetable ornament. In any case the half-length figures of animals alone provide sufficient evidence that this is not a conventional rendering of an "inhabited" vine scroll but a composition put together *ad hoc*.

The most striking feature of the hunters in the rinceau is that they are almost entirely nude. Their costume is confined to a pair of boots, a narrow band (probably a rudimentary *chlamys*) around their shoulders or chest, and an occasional helmet; only the opponent of the bear (or wolf) on the north side wears trousers. Nude figures are not uncommon in semimytho-

¹²² Philadelphus 1916, figs. 20-27.

¹²³ Cf., e.g., a slab from the Roman Forum (E. Strong, *La Scultura Romana*, I, Florence, 1923, p. 122, fig. 77); a frieze adorning the door of Diocletian's mausoleum at Spalato (E. Hébrard and J. Zeiller, *Spalato, Le palais de Dioclétien*, Paris, 1912, pl. 81, figs.); mosaic pavements at Antioch (*Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II, pls. 45, 70) and Gerasa (*Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, pl. 58c).

¹²⁴ Cf., examples at Beisan, Kabr Hiram, and Khirbet el-Muhayet, Church of SS. Lot and Procopius (above, n. 116). Also a pavement at Antioch (*Antioch*, II, pl. 41) and carved rinceaux on the Chair of Maximian (C. Cecchelli, *La Cattedra di Massimiano*, Rome, 1936, pls. 1-13) and on the Mshatta façade (e.g., K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I, Oxford, 1932, pl. 72).

logical or idyllic hunting scenes of earlier centuries,¹²⁵ but are quite exceptional in this advanced period.¹²⁶ Perhaps our artist was influenced by representations of hunting cupids. To depict cupids performing the activities of adults was a favorite device in Hellenistic and Roman art well known from Pompeian frescoes and other works, and hunting is one of the pursuits frequently represented.¹²⁷ It is particularly noteworthy in this connection that one of the figures on our mosaic is shown in a fight with a rooster (Fig. 26). This representation must be inspired by scenes of cockfighting, a favorite amusement of Greeks and Romans often depicted in art. The protagonists in this game are two cocks and quite often they are accompanied by one or two humans inciting them to mortal combat or otherwise assisting the fighters. In the late Hellenistic and Roman periods these "seconds" are usually cupids.¹²⁸ Incidentally, the allusion to this game, which in Athens at least was performed in the theater, makes it appear possible that the animal fights depicted on our pavement are meant to be theatrical performances rather than actual hunts. In that case, however, there is an even stronger likelihood that the prototype showed cupids rather than adults. Circus

¹²⁵ Cf. a man attacking a boar on a pavement at Uthina (*Inventaire*, II, 362 pl.); hunters on pavements at Antioch and Ostia quoted above in notes 114 and 115 respectively; and, among the hunters of a well-known floor of the Constantinian Villa at Antioch, the mythological figure of Meleager (*Antioch*, II, pl. 65 no. 87N; Levi, pl. 56b). For cupids as hunters see below.

¹²⁶ The hunters in rinceaux on sixth- and seventh-century pavements in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan (above, n. 116) — products of a regional school to which the work at Nikopolis is obviously related (above, nn. 76, 105) — are all fully dressed. There are, however, nude figures of hunters in the lower zone of the Orpheus mosaic in Jerusalem (*Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 7, 1901, pls. 7–8) and on Coptic stone carvings (above, n. 116; also J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, Vienna, 1904, p. 26, no. 7283, and fig. 30).

¹²⁷ Pompeian frescoes: Rizzo, *Pittura Ellenistico-Romana*, pl. 139; Reinach, *Répertoire de Peintures*, pp. 83 f. Pavement from Kos in the museum at Constantinople: G. Mendel, *Catalogue des Sculptures Grecques, Romaines et Byzantines*, III, Constantinople, 1914, pp. 509 ff., no. 1305. Sarcophagus in the Terme Museum in Rome: *Critica d'Arte*, I, 1935–6, pl. 88, fig. 1a, facing p. 128. Pavement in Vienne: *Inventaire*, I, 161 pl. (or Fabia, *Mosaïques Romaines des Musées de Lyon*, fig. 12 and pp. 101 ff.). In the last two instances the hunters are without wings, but they are clearly children. See also below for hunting cupids in rinceaux.

¹²⁸ Cf., e.g., a pavement at Antioch (*Antioch*, II, pl. 48, no. 64, or Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 43a) and the numerous examples quoted by Levi in this connection (pp. 193 f.), to which may be added the sarcophagi referred to by Cabrol-Leclercq, *Dictionnaire*, III, 2, s.v. Coq, cols. 2892 f. A gem illustrated by A. Furtwängler (*Die Antiken Gemmen*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1900, I, pl. 42, no. 32) is particularly interesting because it shows the cocks being incited by a cupid armed with a short weapon comparable to that wielded by our "hunter." The artist at Nikopolis, who turned the scene into a fight between cock and human being, may have had in mind also representations of boys and cupids attacked by cocks (F. Winter, *Die Typen der figürlichen Terrakotten*, II = *Die Antiken Terrakotten*, ed. by R. Kekule von Stradonitz, III, 2, Berlin and Stuttgart, 1903, pp. 278 f.), though in these instances the human figures are usually depicted as more or less helpless victims.

games are among the scenes frequently enacted by cupids.¹²⁹ Adult hunters, on the other hand, when identifiable as *venatores* in an amphitheater, are usually fully attired.¹³⁰

The fact that our figures are enclosed in a rinceau further increases the likelihood that the artist had in mind representations of cupids. As is well known, in Hellenistic and Roman art rinceaux are frequently populated by such figures and the hunters in rinceaux of pre-Christian and secular origin are nearly always cupids.¹³¹ At the same time, however, it is quite clear that our hunters are meant to be adults; two of them are even bearded (cf. Fig. 21). In age they are equal, in size and importance at least comparable, to the two large, statuesque figures in the central panel. Thus we are reminded of a type of composition which occurs several times on the pavements of Antioch and also elsewhere, a composition which shows a series of lively hunting incidents arranged around a central figure, or group of figures, usually of larger size. We may quote the following examples:

- (1) Villelaure (*Inventaire*, I, 105 pl.); the group in the center has been interpreted by Héron de Villefosse as Diana and Callisto (*Bulletin Archéologique*, 1903, pp. 23 ff.).
- (2) Lillebonne (S. Reinach, *Répertoire de Peintures*, p. 26); in the center are Apollo and Daphne.
- (3) Korone (cf. above, n. 130); in the center is Dionysus accompanied by a satyr.
- (4) Antioch-Yakto (cf. above, n. 130); in the center is a bust of "Megalopsychia," for which see below, nn. 134, 147.

¹²⁹ Cf. the sarcophagi discussed by Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire*, pp. 348 f., 461 ff. In these instances Cumont interprets the cupids as representations of souls in another world. Cupids as circus fighters may be seen also on a pavement in Vienne (above, n. 127).

¹³⁰ I quote almost at random from a very rich material: Pavements at Zliten (S. Aurigemma, *I mosaici di Zliten*, Rome and Milan, 1926, pp. 178 ff. and figs. 111 ff.; only the barbarians are without clothing); in the Villa Borghese in Rome (*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 17, 1940, pl. 30); at Nennig (*Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1933, cols. 681 f.); in Tunisia (*Inventaire*, II, no. 465a; cf. *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de France*, 1915, pp. 127 f.); at Antioch-Yakto (*Antioch*, I, pp. 116 ff., or Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 77 f.; for the interpretation of the hunting scenes on this pavement as *venationes* cf. H. Seyrig in *Berytus*, 2, 1935, pp. 42 ff., and L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'orient Grec*, Paris, 1940, pp. 329 f., with further references); at Korone (M. N. Valmin, *The Swedish Messenia Expedition*, Lund, 1938, pp. 469 ff.; Ch. Picard in *Revue Archéologique*, 6th series, 18, 1941, pp. 159 ff.). Many other fully equipped huntsmen on pavements probably represent *venatores* in a theater rather than real hunters in the open field. Cf. also the *venationes* on ivory diptychs (R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1929, *passim*). For the equipment of the *bestiarii* cf. Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

¹³¹ Cf. the Palmyra frieze (above, n. 115); the mosaic from Syria (above, n. 117); and the border of the Antioch mosaic at Worcester (above, n. 118). With the last-named example, for which see also below, we come fairly close to the period of the Nikopolis pavement. The hunters lack wings but are clearly children (figs. 28-30).

- (5) Antioch, now at Worcester, Massachusetts (Fig. 23; cf. above, n. 118); in the center is a figure of a triumphant hunter-*heros* (or Rhesos?), for which see *Antioch*, II, pls. 71, 73, and Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 86b and p. 364, fig. 151, for interpretation pp. 344 f.
- (6) Antioch, now Dumbarton Oaks (*Antioch*, III, pl. 51, no. 112, and Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 86a and pp. 358 f.); in the center is a victorious huntress (*Artemis*?).

In these instances the hunting scenes form a large and important part of the composition and cannot be classified merely as frame decorations. One of the floors from Antioch, now at Worcester, is particularly interesting in our context because it has in addition to the satellite hunting scenes, which surround the central figure and occupy the greater part of the surface, a narrow rinceau border enlivened by hunting cupids (Figs. 24, 28–30).¹³² The band with hunting scenes at Nikopolis, in fact, seems to be a conflation of two elements which in the Worcester pavement are separate. The characterization of the frieze as a frame clearly divided from the central panel, the nudity of the hunters, and the foliage setting are features reminiscent of the border of the Worcester pavement and other rinceau borders of the same kind.¹³³ But in age, size, and importance our hunters are more nearly comparable to those in the field surrounding the central figure on the Antiochian floor. It was stated earlier that the rinceau at Nikopolis was not simply a repetition of a traditional ornamental design but seems to have been composed *ad hoc*, and that its size gives it an importance which goes beyond that of an ordinary frame. Indeed, it now appears that the frieze, though based on the traditional rinceau with hunting cupids, was designed with a view to giving the hunting incidents a role comparable to that of the satellite scenes on the Antioch pavements and their relatives.

We must now examine the central group of the Nikopolis floor in the light of these comparisons. In the majority of the pavements which we have listed, there is a thematic connection between satellite scenes and central figure or group. On the pavement at Villelaure and on the Antioch floors at Worcester and Dumbarton Oaks the center is occupied by figures of divine or heroic hunters. In the case of the pavement from Antioch-Yakto, where the center is occupied by a personification of *Megalopsychia*, most scholars likewise agree that there is an inner connection between the hunting scenes and this central figure, even though various different theories have been advanced as to its precise meaning.¹³⁴ So far as our pavement is concerned there

¹³² See preceding footnote.

¹³³ See n. 131.

¹³⁴ See below, n. 147. Picard, *loc. cit.*, p. 161, has suggested that hunters and “*Megalopsychia*” may have been brought together fortuitously and has adduced as a possible analogy the pavement at Korone (above, n. 130), where there is no evident connection between

can be no doubt that the two figures in the center also have to do with the hunt, witness their equipment and the animals crouched at their feet.

This central group at Nikopolis is reminiscent of certain representations of the Heavenly Twins.¹³⁵ The Dioscuroi were frequently associated with hunting¹³⁶ and also with circus games.¹³⁷ Thus one could imagine as a prototype of the whole composition a mosaic such as that in Worcester with the Dioscuroi taking the place of the single *heros* who there occupies the center.¹³⁸ Whether or not there was in fact a single specific prototype of this kind, there can be no doubt that the design of our pavement incorporates the same three elements of which the floor at Worcester is composed: central statuary, a satellite zone of hunting incidents, and a rinceau border of hunting cupids — but with the important difference that the two outer zones have been contracted to form a single element.

The fact that the artist at Nikopolis chose to represent the satellite scenes in the form of an “inhabited” rinceau frame has interesting implications bearing partly upon the meaning of the pavement, partly upon the history of style in the sixth century. The latter implications will be discussed in Part III of these studies. Our immediate task is to explain the meaning of this remarkable composition in the context of Dometios’ church.

Our mosaic is without parallel among the decorated pavements in early Christian and early Byzantine churches. Since sacred personages were not as a rule represented on floors for fear of sacrilege, Christian pavement dec-

central group and satellite scenes; but he has failed to take into account the much more closely comparable instances at Antioch itself which we have mentioned.

¹³⁵ Cf., e.g., M. Albert, *Le culte de Castor et Pollux en Italie*, Paris, 1883, pl. III, 2, and p. 168, no. 235; F. Chapouthier, *Les Dioscures au service d’une déesse*, Paris, 1935, pp. 48 ff., no. 26, and pl. I; p. 36, no. 14, and pl. XI; p. 63, no. 54, and pl. XI. The tree separating the two figures might derive from the same source, though there seems to be no example in the iconography of the Dioscuroi where it is as conspicuous as it is here (Chapouthier, *op. cit.*, pp. 89 f., nos. 96 f.; also pp. 143, 149).

¹³⁶ Chapouthier, *op. cit.*, pp. 282 f. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon*, I, col. 1157. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire*, p. 67. Cf. also a Christian(!) sarcophagus in Toulouse which shows the Dioscuroi associated with a hunting scene (E. Le Blant, *Les Sarcophages Chrétiens de la Gaule*, Paris, 1886, pl. 38, 1, and p. 124; Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 103, n. 4; p. 454, n. 2).

¹³⁷ *Römische Mitteilungen*, 15, 1900, p. 36 and *passim*.

¹³⁸ One, and perhaps both, of the figures on the pavement at Nikopolis is shown with one foot half lifted from the ground. This recalls the stance of the *heros* on the Antioch floor at Worcester (Levi, *op. cit.*, pl. 86b), but whether at Nikopolis the legs were actually crossed cannot be decided from the available photographs. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that, according to a recent hypothesis, the bronze statue of a “ruler” in the Terme Museum in Rome, which is the closest known parallel to the Worcester *heros*, represents one of the Dioscuroi (P. Williams in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 49, 1945, pp. 330 ff.).

oration offered little scope for life-size statuesque figures such as those depicted in the central panel. Hunting scenes do occur in Christian buildings, but usually the hunt is merely one among several scenes of rural life¹³⁹ or is confined to a border or other incidental feature of the decoration.¹⁴⁰ No other instance in early Christian floor decoration is known to me where a whole large panel is devoted to an elaborate composition consisting entirely of hunters and hunting incidents.¹⁴¹ Featured as prominently as it is at Nikopolis the subject could be extremely offensive. Here as in the case of the mosaic of earth and ocean it must have been the inscription which explained the *raison d'être* of the representation and provided, if not a positively religious, at least a neutral, interpretation. The fact that the tablet with the inscription was placed so conspicuously and, indeed, somewhat incongruously in front, and probably in the hands, of the two martial figures in the center seems to emphasize its vital importance.

Of this inscription only a small fragment remains. No attempt to reconstruct it can be more than guesswork. For all practical purposes the inscription is nonexistent and the interpretation of the panel must be undertaken without the help of explanatory verses.¹⁴² When it is remembered how easily one might be led astray as to the meaning of the picture of earth and ocean, if it were not for its inscription, it is obvious that we must proceed with caution.

We have already seen that the design of the hunting mosaic, like that of its companion picture, is based on conventional pictorial types. As in the representation of earth and ocean these types may not be the ones commonly employed for the specific theme to which the floor is dedicated. We must

¹³⁹ Cf. the mosaics at Beisan, Kabr Hiram, Khirbet el-Muhayet, and Gerasa quoted in n. 116 above.

¹⁴⁰ For hunting scenes in borders of church pavements cf. Ma'in and Gerasa (above, n. 119) and Stobi, Episcopal Church (*Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Bulgare*, 10, 1936, p. 286 and fig. 176). For hunting motifs in small secondary panels cf. Beisan, Monastery, Hall A (Fitzgerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery*, pl. 6). A relatively closer analogy is in the Theotokos Chapel at Mount Nebo, where a panel with hunting scenes occupies the center of the composition in the nave (Saller, *op. cit.*, pls. 109 f.). I omit from this discussion instances where animals, unaccompanied by human figures, are shown chasing each other.

¹⁴¹ A floor at Argos, partially excavated by a Dutch expedition and as yet unpublished, provides a possible parallel. There was a row of seven panels with hunting scenes skirting a rectangular space, which has been interpreted tentatively as the atrium of a church. But this interpretation is hypothetical (cf. the article by Vollgraff quoted above in n. 111).

¹⁴² We cannot even say for certain what, if any, meter was employed. All other mosaic inscriptions of the first Dometios in the church are in hexameters and are spaced in such a way that the end of each line coincides with the end of a verse. The extant fragment of the inscription on the hunting mosaic shows the ends of the first two lines; while the second (. . . EONTAC) is acceptable as the end of a hexameter, the first (. . . MONAC) is not. On this problem see also Chatzes, in *Ἀρχαιολ. Ἐφημερίς*, 1918, pp. 32 f.

also reckon with the likelihood that the connection between the pictorial motif and its intended meaning may have been somewhat tenuous; words and picture may have tallied no more precisely than they do in the wing opposite.

Since, however, the floor with the hunting scenes was very definitely designed as a *pendant* to that with earth and ocean — witness its location, size, general layout, and, above all, the identical designs of its two outer frames — the latter can contribute towards the interpretation of the former. Certain general principles which we found to underlie the composition in the north wing are likely to apply to that in the south wing as well. In the case of the picture of earth and ocean the meaning is associated specifically with the location of the mosaic on the floor and is entirely neutral and carries no specific message. To be sure, these principles do not necessarily apply to the hunting pavement but there is an a priori likelihood that they do. This likelihood is even stronger in the case of another principle which we found to be basic to an understanding of the mosaic of earth and ocean, namely the literal meaning of the relationship between picture and frame, through which is represented the actual physical relationship between land and sea. The hunting pavement has the same marine frieze as a frame. If the frieze in the north wing was to leave any impression at all on the beholder as an image of the all-embracing ocean it surely would have been most inadvisable to use the same frame motif again in the south wing unless here too the relationship between picture and frame was to be taken literally. In other words there is a strong probability that in this case too the relationship between picture and frame is intended to reproduce that between land and water.¹⁴³ Hence it may be assumed that the field on which the hunters dis-

¹⁴³ This obvious parallelism with the composition in the north wing was ignored by Pelekanides, who interpreted the water frame, the rinceau with hunting scenes, and the central panel as symbols of three stages in a purely abstract representation of the "new life in Christ" (cf. pp. 118 f. in his article quoted above, n. 3). The fishing scenes would belong to the first stage, the "calling of men." It is difficult to believe that any such weighty meaning could have been attached to these scenes since there are fishermen also in the frieze in the north wing, which, as we know from the inscription, is a purely neutral symbol of the ocean. The name inscriptions "Hermes" and "Ophellyras," which accompany two of the figures of fishermen in the water frame in the south wing, do, however, pose a problem. Vollgraff (on p. 48 of the article quoted above, n. 111) thought that the first of these stands for Hermes Trismegistos, for whose activities as a fisherman he refers to Cumont and Eisler. But surely the two names must be interpreted jointly. Of the two Ophellyras is by far the more unusual and therefore potentially the more revealing. I have been unable to find the name in precisely this form in any other context. Could these be the names of ordinary mortals (perhaps the artists?) pictured on what we shall see is probably the fringe of paradise? For Hermes as a proper name see W. Pape, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen*, Braunschweig, 1850, p. 125; *ibid.*, pp. 293, 426 for names akin to Ophellyras (see also Chatzes, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

port themselves either represents the earth once more — this time under another aspect in which the human element evidently plays a large part — or else a second land mass in the ocean, an “antichthon” to use a term of classical geography. In a Christian context a second land mass could hardly be anything but the terrestrial paradise which Cosmas imagined to be separated from the earth by the ocean,¹⁴⁴ and which in medieval thought often takes the shape of an island, the Christian version of the Island of the Blessed.¹⁴⁵ It is likely then that the hunting mosaic is primarily a geographical representation like its counterpart in the north wing and that the two are complementary parts of a cosmological scheme. The hunt is a “map symbol” like the trees and the birds in the panel opposite.

We should perhaps not rule out altogether the possibility that the subject was meant to be taken quite literally and that hunting is here depicted as a kind of epitome of human activities. But this interpretation is unlikely partly because in a religious context hunting could hardly be selected as a representative activity and partly because a number of characteristics of the composition are, if not actually opposed, at least irrelevant to such an explanation. It is much more likely that the theme is used metaphorically.

Here we must recall the various related pavement compositions in Antioch and elsewhere which have been mentioned above. Whenever we find hunting scenes arranged around a central figure or group this central subject is a god, a victorious hero, or, in the case of the mosaic at Antioch-Yakto, a personification of an abstract idea.¹⁴⁶ Much has been written about the precise meaning of *megalopsychia* whom the personification at Yakto represents, but according to the most acceptable interpretation, it is a virtue, a moral force, which inspires the fighters.¹⁴⁷ Thus the presence of a central figure or group always means a distinction of two levels, the human and the divine, strife and victory, effort and achievement. A composition of this kind

¹⁴⁴ Stornajolo, *op. cit.*, pl. 7; Winstedt's edition of Cosmas' text (above, n. 97), p. 60. *Ibid.*, p. 8, n. 1, it is asserted by the editor that the same view was shared by Philostorgius. But although this author in Book III, ch. 10, of his History (ed. J. Bidez, Leipzig, 1913, pp. 38 f.) speaks of the River Geon (or Nile) as coming from paradise and flowing beneath the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea before reëmerging, he does not seem to visualize the ocean as a complete barrier between paradise and the inhabited world. A passage at the end of ch. 11 (*ibid.*, p. 42) suggests that he thought of paradise as being washed by the ocean only on the far (i.e., eastern) side.

¹⁴⁵ A. Graf, *Miti, leggende e superstizioni del medio evo*, I: *Il mito del paradiso terrestre*, etc., Turin, 1892, pp. 6 f.

¹⁴⁶ See the list above, pp. 112 f.

¹⁴⁷ A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, Paris, 1936, p. 138. G. Downey, in *Church History*, 10, 1941, pp. 368 ff. *Id.* in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 76, 1945, pp. 283 ff. Levi, *op. cit.*, pp. 339 ff.

could well serve as an allegory in a church. There are numerous passages in late classical and early Christian literature in which passions, evil, and death are referred to as wild animals.¹⁴⁸ Conquest of vices and passions is a victory over wild animals.¹⁴⁹ Fights in the arena — and we have suggested above that our hunting scenes may well depict theatrical performances — were a familiar allegory of moral strife.¹⁵⁰ The central figures, judging by the analogous compositions in Antioch, must be victors in the fight or representatives of the ideal for which the struggle is waged.

At Nikopolis these central figures clearly constitute the principal subject of the representation. If, however, they do represent victors in the moral arena of life their location is a priori likely to be in paradise rather than in the world we know. It was widely held that those who had acquitted themselves well in moral strife — and particularly the martyrs — qualify for admission to the terrestrial paradise.¹⁵¹ For our present context it is noteworthy that this admission to paradise was represented in art through the image of the victorious gladiator. On a curious holy-water vessel found in Tunis¹⁵² we see, in addition to an Orans crowned by Victory and a Good Shepherd, a fully armed gladiator and several groups of fighting animals. The presence of a palm tree and of stags drinking from the four rivers clearly indicates that the locality is paradise and that we have here an allegory of the victorious soul. Incidentally, there is also a symbol of the sea in the shape of a nereid riding on a hippocamp.

It is likely therefore that the hunting scene at Nikopolis is a “map sym-

¹⁴⁸ For relevant passages see the references given by R. Eisler, *Orphisch-dionysische Mysteriengedanken in der christlichen Antike* (Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, II, part 2), Leipzig and Berlin, 1925, pp. 71 ff., and G. Downey in *Church History*, 9, 1940, p. 213, n. 11. The *locus classicus* for Christian identification of evil with a wild animal is 1 Petr. 5, 8; cf. Cumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 453 ff. Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, after describing the tortures of Christians who had been condemned to fight with wild animals in the amphitheater, proceeds to refer to the passions and fury inciting their persecutors as wild beasts (Book V, ch. 1; Migne, P.G., 20, cols. 421 ff., 429 B, C).

¹⁴⁹ Eisler, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 94 n. 1, 167. Downey, *op. cit.*, pp. 211 f.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. e.g., Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, ch. 29 (Loeb ed., pp. 294 ff.); also the chapter of Eusebius quoted above in n. 148. Other references are given by G. B. de Rossi in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1867, pp. 82 ff. The similes, however, are usually couched in athletic rather than gladiatorial terms; cf. also J. A. Sawhill, *The Use of Athletic Metaphors in the Biblical Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, Princeton, 1928, and A. Alföldi, *Die Kontorniaten*, Budapest, 1943, p. 31. For the use of the cockfight as a Christian symbol cf. de Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁵¹ Tertullian, *De anima*, ch. 55 (Migne, PL 2, col. 789). St. Ephraem, *Sermo de reprehensione* (T. J. Lamy, *Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones*, II, Malines, 1886, cols. 372 ff.). *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*, lxxv (Migne, P.G. 6, col. 1317; for this work see also below, n. 155).

¹⁵² De Rossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 ff. and pl. facing p. 80. Cf. A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, Paris, 1946, II, p. 58.

bol" for paradise rather than for this world. A second representation of the earth — albeit under a moral rather than a physical aspect — is not very likely in any case. Furthermore, on the assumption that the pavement depicts paradise, some of its most striking features can be given a very precise interpretation which they otherwise lack. The cupid-like nudity of the hunters may well allude to paradise¹⁵³ and, in fact, this may have been a reason why the artist chose to render the hunting incidents after the pattern of the traditional rinceau with cupids.¹⁵⁴ The tree so conspicuously placed in the center of the whole composition would assume a specific meaning as the Tree of Life. Finally, an interpretation of the mosaic as a picture of paradise would also permit us to explain the fact that there are two "victors." These might be no other than Enoch and Elijah, the first and most famous of all the inhabitants of paradise since the Fall. According to the Bible Enoch and Elijah are the only two human beings who have not known death. It was a commonplace of early Christian exegesis that they were taken straight to paradise to await there the end of days.¹⁵⁵ At first sight the identification of our two martial figures with Enoch and Elijah perhaps seems improbable. But it must be remembered that our artist used stock patterns throughout, and that, as we have seen in the north wing, too close an agreement between the content and the type used to depict the content must not be expected.

As a matter of fact we know that at least in subsequent centuries Enoch and Elijah were sometimes represented in somewhat the same guise in which they appear here. The most important witness is a mosaic pavement in the apse of the church in Cruas dated 1097 A.D. (Fig. 35).¹⁵⁶ This representa-

¹⁵³ For nudity in paradise cf. St. Ephraem, *De paradiso Eden Sermo II* (*Sancti Ephraem Syri opera omnia*, ed. S. E. Assemanus, III, Syriace et Latine, Rome, 1743, p. 567 B, C). Cf. also above, n. 129, for Cumont's interpretation of the cupids enacting circus games on sarcophagus reliefs.

¹⁵⁴ See above, pp. 111 ff. The vine foliage may also be intended as an allusion to afterlife and immortality (Eisler, *op. cit.*, pp. 185 f.; C. Leonardi, *Ampelos, Rome*, 1947, parts I and II, *passim*).

¹⁵⁵ For early references to Enoch and Elijah in paradise see: *Gospel of Nicodemus*, ch. 9(25) (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 8, Buffalo, 1886, p. 437). Irenaeus, *Contra haereses*, Book V, ch. 5 (Migne, *P.G.* 7, cols. 1134 f.). Jerome, *Contra Joannem*, no. 29 (Migne, *P.L.* 23, col. 398). Augustine, *Contra Julianum*, Book VI, no. 30 (Migne, *P.L.* 45, cols. 1581 f.). St. Ephraem, sermon on the Fall (see below, n. 164). *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*, lxxxv (Migne, *P.G.* 6, col. 1328; this text, which was probably written in Syria in the fifth century — cf. G. Bardy in *Revue Biblique*, 42, 1933, pp. 211 f. — refers to the bodies of saints resurrected after Christ's passion according to Matt. 27, 52, and says they "stay in immortality like Enoch and Elijah and are with them in paradise"; in other words, the two may well be shown in the company of other figures).

¹⁵⁶ H. Revoil, *Architecture Romane du Midi de la France*, III, Paris, 1873, pls. 78, 79. Cf. G. B. Ladner, *Die Papstbildnisse des Altertums und des Mittelalters*, I, Vatican City, 1941, pp. 229 ff. with bibliography.

tion is important not only because it resembles that at Nikopolis in several details, but also because it is executed in the same medium so that one could imagine a certain continuity of workshop tradition through the centuries separating the two monuments.¹⁵⁷ In Cruas Enoch and Elijah, with names inscribed, both appear to be depicted in military costume.¹⁵⁸ Elijah carries a long spear, Enoch a very short one. Between them are two trees, to the right is a zigzag ornament which might stand for water. Elijah is shown in military costume also in a fresco in the apse of S. Elia in Nepi, but the identity of his companion figure is lost.¹⁵⁹

A representation of Enoch and Elijah as hunting heroes could be defended on the ground that their early and painless admission to paradise implied a fortiori a superiority in the struggle against temptation, sin, and death. If the fight against wild beasts is a symbol of this struggle, a representation of Enoch and Elijah as victorious *venatores* would not be inappropriate. The phenomenon would belong in the general category of Biblical figures cast in familiar – and meaningful – molds (e.g., images of Christ as philosopher, of the Virgin as empress, and of angels as soldiers). The question in all such cases is whether the parallel was drawn in literature before it was represented in art. In the present instance it is almost certain that literary invention preceded artistic representation. Already Philo interpreted Enoch's career in terms of an *ἀγών*¹⁶⁰ and the same idea is reflected in one of the orations of Gregory of Nazianz in which he speaks of Enoch's trans-

¹⁵⁷ Cf. P. Clemen, *Die romanische Monumentalmalerei in den Rheinlanden*, Düsseldorf, 1916, pp. 172 ff.; also my paper to be published in the Acts of the Sixth International Congress of Byzantine Studies (see above, n. 106).

¹⁵⁸ This is certainly true for Enoch with his short tunic and laced boots. The type of costume worn by Elijah is not so clearly identifiable though it certainly is not the normal attire of a prophet or saint.

¹⁵⁹ *Dedalo*, 8, pt. 2, 1927–28, pp. 331 f. and p. 335 (ill.); see Ladner, *op. cit.*, p. 230. We may mention also a representation of Enoch and Elijah on the lost retable of the altar of St. Remaclus at Stavelot, which is known from a seventeenth-century drawing; on this work of ca. 1150 the two figures were not in military dress but their arrangement on either side of a tree recalls the Nikopolis pavement (O. v. Falke and H. Frauberger, *Deutsche Schmelzarbeiten des Mittelalters*, Frankfurt a.M., 1904, pl. 70a). Finally attention should be drawn to the singular motif of the tablet in front of, and, according to Sotiriou (above, n. 49), held by our two heroes. This recalls the figures of Enoch and Elijah holding inscribed tablets which are carved in relief on the façades of the cathedrals at Modena and Cremona (A. Kingsley Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, New Haven, 1915–17, I, pp. 408 f., II, pp. 373, 390, III, p. 15, IV, pl. 142, 2; the relief at Cremona is illustrated in *Burlington Magazine*, 45, 1924, pl. IIF after p. 166). The idea of entrusting the two immortals with important inscriptions is particularly appropriate in view of Enoch's traditional role as a scribe; cf. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, II, Oxford, 1913, p. 18 (Book of Jubilees, 4, 16 ff.) and *passim*, see index, pp. 845 f., s.v. Enoch.

¹⁶⁰ *De praemiis et poenis*, 15–21; Loeb ed., VIII, pp. 320 ff.

lation as the prize (ἀθλον) for his sanctity.¹⁶¹ Similarly Elijah's career is compared to a circus contest by St. Ambrose, though in Elijah's case the simile quite naturally is carried through mainly in terms of chariot racing.¹⁶² Of special interest, in view of the obvious compositional relationship of our panel to the usual representations of Adam and Eve, are passages in which Enoch's and Elijah's admission into paradise is contrasted to Adam's and Eve's expulsion from the same place,¹⁶³ and especially a sermon of St. Ephraem in which this idea is combined with that of a victory in arms.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, as an illustration of Ephraem's "gemini victores"¹⁶⁵ who replace Adam and Eve, the "gemini victi," our mosaic would be quite appropriate.¹⁶⁶

A representation of the terrestrial paradise would be a fitting and logical counterpart to the "map" of the earth in the north wing. Paradise is an integral part of the Christian concept of the physical world and a legitimate, indeed, almost a necessary feature of a Christian *mappa mundi*.¹⁶⁷ On

¹⁶¹ Migne, *P.G.* 36, col. 592 A.

¹⁶² Migne, *P.L.* 14, col. 788; cf. also *P.L.* 16, col. 1184 C.

¹⁶³ Cf. the passages of Irenaeus and Augustine referred to above in n. 155.

¹⁶⁴ "Henoch et Elias . . . mirabili raptu ambo in Paradisum translati fuerunt, duo intrarunt unde duo expulsi fuerant; gemini victores in Paradisum invecti sunt, unde gemini victi excedere compulsi fuerant, ut geminos victos victores gemini condemnarent; sic natos parentum iudices fieri placuit. Adam victus et ejectus est, quia coniugi obtemperavit: illi ambo vicerunt et introducti sunt quia honeste vixerunt, Elias insignis castitate et Henoc sanctimonia. Armis, quibus victus est Adam, isti vicerunt; non damnatur a suis, qui victus est, armis, sed ab illo qui eadem arma induit, et vicit (*Sancti Ephraem Syri opera omnia*, ed. S. E. Assemanus, II, Syriace et Latine, Rome, 1740, pp. 324 f.).

¹⁶⁵ Here one might also recall the typological resemblance of our figures to the Heavenly Twins (see above, p. 114). But I am informed that in the Syriac text of St. Ephraem the word rendered by the translator as "gemini" implies only duality and not necessarily twinship.

¹⁶⁶ This explanation need not, however, apply to representations such as those in Cruas and Nepi, where the context of a *venatio* is lacking. It must be remembered that there can be other motivations for showing Enoch and Elijah in armor, particularly their identification with the two Witnesses of the Apocalypse, an identification which goes back to a very early period; cf., e.g., Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, ch. 43 ff. (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 5, Buffalo, 1886, pp. 212 ff.), and Tertullian, *De anima*, ch. 50 (Migne, *P.L.* 2, col. 686). In later medieval literature they also play the role of an armed guard at the entrance to paradise (cf. Graf, *Miti, leggende e superstizioni*, p. 170). In Byzantium, at least by the ninth century, Elijah came close to being worshiped as a military saint; cf. an inscription on a miniature in Ms. gr. 510, f. Cv, in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1929, p. 13 and pl. 19).

¹⁶⁷ Beazley, *Dawn*, I, pp. 332 ff. For cartographic representations cf., e.g., the world map of Cosmas (above, n. 144) and those in the manuscripts of Beatus (above, n. 104). The picture of the world which emerges from our interpretation of the Nikopolis mosaics has, in fact, a marked resemblance to that drawn at precisely the same period by Cosmas Indicopleustes. The rectangular shape of the earth and the ocean surrounding it and separating it from a likewise rectangular paradise are specific points of contact and although Cosmas drew heavily on earlier writers it does not seem possible to find exactly the same combination of geographic concepts elsewhere (cf. however above, n. 97, for the necessarily oblong shape of Cosmas'

medieval maps and cosmographic representations showing paradise "inhabited" by human figures these figures are usually Adam and Eve.¹⁶⁸ But Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise and could be used as a map symbol only by way of a historical allusion. Enoch and Elijah are actually there now and to symbolize paradise through them is in a sense more realistic, more correct "scientifically," and produces a greater sense of actuality.

Other interpretations of the hunting scene could no doubt be suggested and, barring some lucky find, there can hardly be a final solution of the problem it poses. But, whatever the picture stands for, one thing must be considered certain: it is not an independent scene or allegory like the related pavements in Antioch. Framed as it is by the "ocean" the hunt in this instance forms part of, and is subordinated to, a cosmographic representation which must be viewed in conjunction with the "map" of the earth in the opposite wing.

In the succeeding sections of these studies the two floors which we have studied will find their place in a larger context. Iconographically the importance of the Nikopolis mosaics lies chiefly in the fact that they represent in a descriptive and articulate fashion a geographic and cosmographic scheme. Their most important stylistic feature is that they are "synthetic" *emblemata* consisting of basically abstract, heraldic, and geometric elements which are compounded in such a way as to achieve a semblance of organic cohesion. These features will assume a wider significance when seen in the light of the over-all development of subject matter and style in early Byzantine floor decoration. The same characteristics recur in other works of the sixth century and have indeed symptomatic value within that phase of the development which coincides with the era of Justinian and his immediate successors.

earth). But, since our mosaics constitute an artist's paraphrase of a *mappa mundi* rather than a work of cartography, it would not be advisable to press the comparison with this or any other "scientific" system.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. the maps of Beatus (above, n. 104); also a medieval mosaic floor in Novara (E. Aus'm Weerth, *Der Mosaikboden in St. Gereon zu Cöln*, Bonn, 1873, pl. 7).